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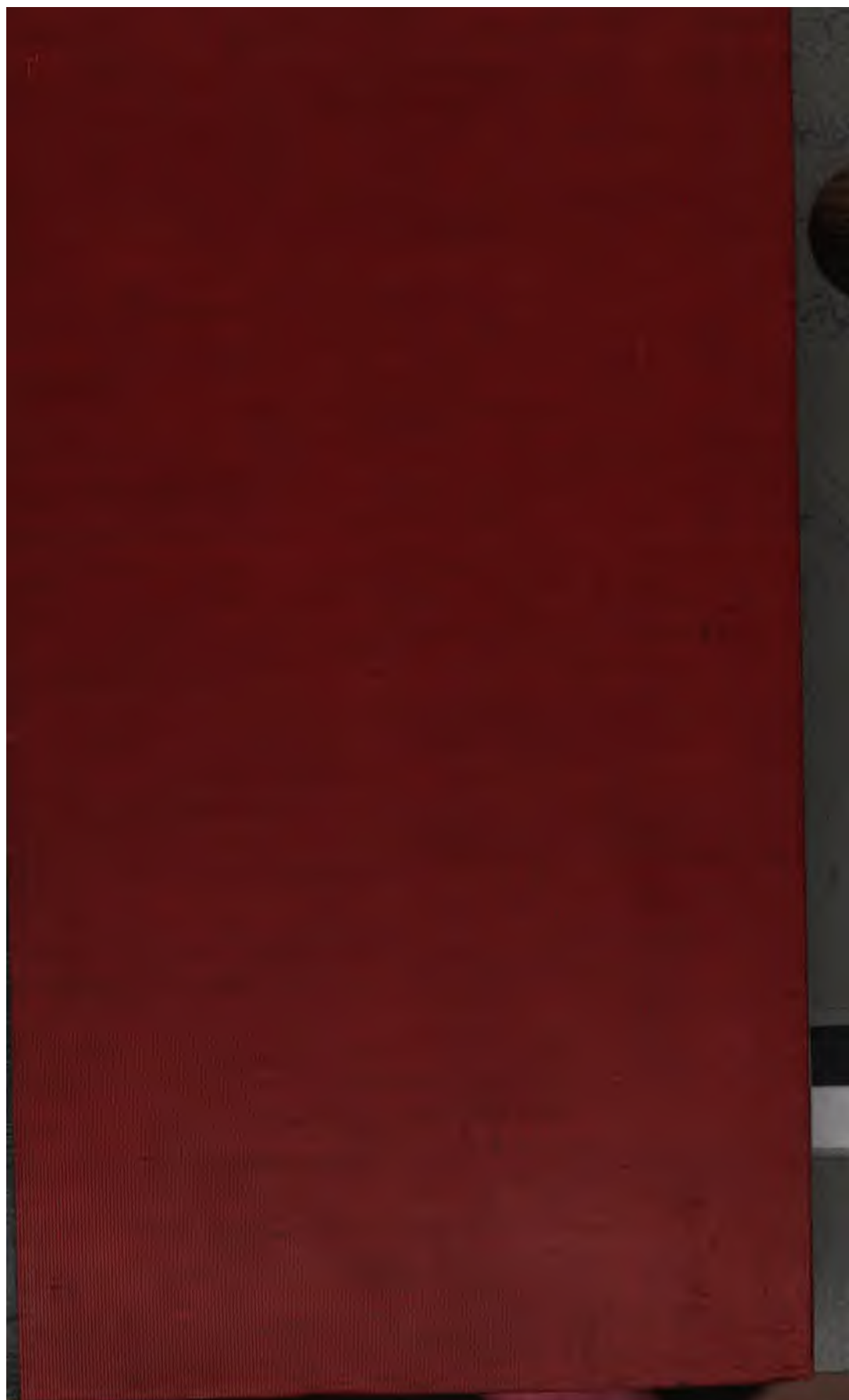
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A. Parker Willis Esq.

with the Author's best respects

Aug. 18<sup>th</sup> 1852.





SHAKESPEARE'S SCHOLAR.





SHAKESPEARE'S .

SCHOLAR:

BEING

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES OF HIS TEXT, CHARACTERS,  
AND COMMENTATORS, WITH AN EXAMINATION OF  
MR. COLLIER'S FOLIO OF 1632.

BY

RICHARD GRANT WHITE, A. M.



· Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν νῦν περὶ τούτων εἰρήσθω. \* \* \* ἄλλοισι γὰρ περὶ  
αὐτέων εἶρηται, ἴδσομεν αὐτά. τὰ δὲ ἄλλοι οὐ καταλάβοντο τούτων μνήμην  
ποιήσομαι."—HERODOTUS, *Erato*, 55.

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OPTIMÆ UXORUM FEMINARUMQUE DILECTISSIMÆ

\_\_\_\_\_

I will undertake to tell why this was written. If the story of the volume should prove uninteresting, that will be the fault of the relator; if the contrary, then you can say, with *Baron Pompolino*,

"And as I'm the parent vine,  
All the glory shall be mine."

The book is called, what its author claims to have been for many years and yet to be, *Shakespeare's Scholar*,—a title which the proudest may be proud to bear, and which the humblest may yet with humility assume. It attempts not to decide what Shakespeare might have written or what he could have written, or to seek the interpretation of his thoughts from those who proclaim themselves his prophets, but to learn from him what he did write, and to study to understand that in the submissive yet still inquiring spirit with which a neophyte listens to the teachings of a revered and no less beloved master. It is in this spirit that I have studied Shakespeare since the time whereof my memory runneth not to the contrary; and it is because so few of his editors, commentators, and verbal critics, seem to have thus studied him, and because during all my study I have kept free from the contamination and perversion of their instruction, and have learned only of him, that for the sake of the thousands who love, feel, and understand him as I do, or who would do so, were it not for those who have made themselves middlemen between him and them, doling out his golden thoughts and stopping



the best part of them on the way,—it is for the sake of those readers and on their part, as one of them, that I have written this book; and I wrote it thus.

Though never one of those who devote their social hours to trumpeting their admiration of him who wrote for all time, yet having been, as you have already seen, his devoted student at so early an age as to be unable to remember when I first began to muse and ponder with wondering delight upon his pages, it was inevitable that love should grow with knowledge, admiration with the capacity to apprehend, and reverence with the gradually acquired ability to compare his mind with those of the others who are called great in literature. But what I first esteemed a misfortune I now regard as one of the happiest circumstances of my intellectual life:—my Father's bookshelves were guiltless of an annotated copy, and I read Shakespeare pure and simple,—that is, in a state as nearly approaching purity as the mere text of Mr. Singer's edition gave it to me. A copy of the small Chiswick edition in one volume, bought with the savings of my own slender stock of pocket money, kept in my own room, carried with me to the country during my school vacations, read by surreptitious candlelight when I was supposed to be asleep, was, through boyhood to youth, through youth to manhood, my companion and my constant joy. You will pardon the egotism, for you will see, if you do not already, that it is necessary.

Thrown as I continually was among those who were men of scholarship, even if not professional or

literary men, you will wonder, perhaps, how I avoided reading or talking Shakesperian criticism. It was thus. I had heard much said of the wonderful learning and ability which had been brought to the illustration of Shakespeare; and discovering that such eminent names as those of Pope and Johnson were enrolled in the list of his editors and commentators, I looked forward to the perusal of these writings with delightful anticipations. At last, in my Freshman year, I picked up a volume of an annotated edition in the room of a classmate:—the edition, I think, was one called Reed and Johnson's by its American publishers. I opened it eagerly and looked for the comments. The surprise and disappointment with which I read them, I will not undertake to tell you. I found them to consist, not of expansions or illustrations of Shakespeare's thought or analysis of his characters, but of attempts to illuminate passages which had always been to me as clear as noonday, or cold and pragmatic approval or censure of works which I thought should be spoken of only with enthusiastic admiration, tempered with reverence. Nearly all the comments, whether right or wrong, irritated me equally; for nearly all of them seemed to me to be superfluous and therefore insulting. But I reflected that I was but a College boy, and that these were the great Dr. Johnson, the learned Bishop Warburton, or the great poet Pope, or the "very ingenious" contemporaries and friends of those eminent men; and feeling that respectful consideration for their eminence

became me, I read on for half an hour in various parts of the volume, until I came to Johnson's closing remarks upon *Cymbeline*, in which he speaks of "the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct," &c., and finishes by pointing out the "unresisting imbecility" of the work. This was too much for me: shocked, wounded, repelled, with a sense of personal wrong I flung the book aside, and mentally registered a solemn vow never to read again a criticism or comment of any kind upon Shakespeare's works. My thoughts were akin to those of the author of the *Pursuits of Literature*, whose remarkable satire I met with, years afterward.

"Must I for SHAKESPEARE no compassion feel,  
Almost eat up by COMMENTATING zeal?  
On Avon's banks I heard ACTÆON mourn,  
By fell Black Letter Dogs in pieces torn;  
Dogs that from Gothic kennels eager start  
All well broke-in by *Coney-catching Art*,

\* \* \* \* \*

Hot was the chase; I left it out of breath;  
I wish'd not to be in at SHAKESPEARE's death."

I reasoned thus:—If this be what such men as Pope, and Warburton, and Johnson say about Shakespeare, and with not only the assent but the approbation of the world, their Shakespeare and the world's Shakespeare is not mine; and mine is too dear to me to be given up at the bidding of any poet, or bishop, or lexicographer of them all. Except the examination of some MS. notes, original and selected, kindly lent to me by Mr. Hackett, I kept my vow until about five years ago. Then I bought a

copy of Mr. Knight's Pictorial Edition, and having studied Shakespeare himself alone for so many years, I thought that I might with indifference read a commentator again. From Mr. Knight's labors I derived great satisfaction: his were altogether different comments from those which still fretted in my memory. I found that his Shakespeare and mine were the same; and I read with a new pleasure his remarks upon the different Plays:—a pleasure which I need hardly say was repeated and heightened by subsequent acquaintance with the criticisms of Coleridge, Wilson, Schlegel, and Hazlitt. But I learned from him a fact of which my determination had kept me ignorant, or rather, made me forgetful,—that the text of Shakespeare before the date of his edition was filled with the alterations and interpolations of those very editors whose labors had impressed me so unpleasantly; and finding that in some of the few passages which had been obscure to me, the obscurity was of their creating, not of Shakespeare's or even his printers', I instantly began the critical study of the text. From that time to this, excepting my indispensable daily duties, I have done little else than labor in this field. Mr. Halliwell's excellent catalogue of Shakesperian literature pointed out the work before me, and all the necessary books which I was not able to procure immediately were attainable to me in the yet unopened Astor Library, through the kindness of Dr. Cogswell, or in the noble dramatic collection of Mr. Burton. Both of these libraries contain fine copies of the original

folio edition of Shakespeare's plays ; and Mr. Burton's is not wanting in a copy of any edition of even the least critical value, from the date of the original to the present day, while it abounds in the rarest and most valuable editions of our earlier as well as later dramatists, poets, and prose writers whose works can in any way throw light upon the text of Shakespeare and the history of our drama or our language. With the early dramatists, and the poets from Robert of Gloucester and Piers Ploughman, I had already a familiar acquaintance, and I was thus enabled to give my attention to literature purely Shakesperian. What knowledge my five years of hard labor has given me of the mass of mingled learning and ignorance, sense and folly, with which Shakespeare has as nearly as possible been overwhelmed, the following pages will partly show :—and but partly ; for the mere reference to it all would make a volume in itself ; and a very unnecessary and wearisome volume it would be. But it is not because I have gone through such preparation that I have written this book ; but because before I undertook the task I had studied Shakespeare himself with constant devotion during the whole of my thinking life, and had not discovered the need of any comments or explanations at all, except in a few passages, nearly every one of which my more recent studies have shown me were obscured by the labors of those editors who lived before the expiration of the first quarter of this century, or by the carelessness of the printers of the first edition, or their inability to decipher the manu-

script which was furnished to them. During my study of the text in the original folio and in Steevens' reprint of the quartos, it was my habit, in all passages in which they differed from the editions in common use, to enter their readings upon the margins of my copy of Shakespeare; and as I read the commentators and editors I did the same with their noteworthy conjectural emendations, adding my own solution of the difficulty in many cases in which it seemed to me that there was either no difficulty at all, or that the simplest means of solving it had been neglected. It was impossible that such a course of study should be pursued by one who was in the almost daily habit of committing his thoughts upon other subjects to paper, without the accompaniment of written notes. These gradually accumulated upon me, sometimes in the shape of mere memorandums, sometimes extending themselves almost into short essays; and they, with the exception of the pages devoted to the consideration of Mr. Collier's folio, form the bulk of the ensuing volume. They were written with no intent that they should see the light in this form, if at all; for the most devoted student of Shakespeare will shrink from adding the weight of his thoughts to the burden under which the text of the great dramatist has so long groaned. But as, after the appearance of the two papers in *Putnam's Magazine* upon Mr. Collier's folio, it was suggested to me by some whose judgments I respected, that a book written in the same spirit upon the text of Shakespeare, would be

welcomed by all those who were giving attention to a subject which had derived renewed interest from recent events, and would help to beget an universal habit of more direct communion with him, to a disregard of the notes of editors and commentators; and as the effect of what I had written, if it were to have effect at all, would be to lead to the reception of the simple and obvious meaning of his lines, I determined to prepare for publication selections from and expansions of the notes of my studies. This I have done; and in this volume you see the result. The book was not deliberately made; but, like *Topsy*, it "grewed." Unlike that young lady, however, it was not "raised on a spec;" for you need not be told that, were five editions to be sold, it would not pay me day laborer's wages for the mere time I have devoted to the preparation of it.

But though the result of accumulation rather than of projection, the book is not without unity of purpose; that purpose being to show that the obvious signification of Shakespeare's poetry is not only the true sense but the best, and that therefore no thinking man, of ordinary information and intelligence, needs the aid of editors and commentators to help him to the full understanding and enjoyment of nearly every passage which came from Shakespeare's pen. People are apt to forget that Shakespeare wrote his plays to please the promiscuous public of London, at a time when the general diffusion of knowledge was infinitely less than it is now.

He wrote to make money by interesting such a public, and of course to be understood by it ; and he was understood. The general public of his day, those who, in the words of his fellow actors, judged their "six-pen'orth" and their "shilling's worth" as well as those who judged their "five shillings' worth at a time, or higher," crowded the theatre to hear his plays, while Jonson's more learned and labored, though not more finished, dramas were played to empty benches. Leonard Digges, a contemporary of both the poets, has left us some verses, which you have doubtless seen before, and which have value as a testimony to Shakespeare's power of pleasing the people of his time.

" So have I seen, when Cæsar would appear,  
And on the stage at half-sword parley were  
Brutus and Cassius, O how the audience  
Were ravished! with what wonder they went thence!  
When, some new day, they would not brook a line  
Of tedious, though well labor'd Catiline;  
Sejanus, too, was irksome, they prized more  
"Honest" Iago, or the jealous Moor.  
And though the Fox and subtil Alchymist,  
Long intermitted could not quite be mist,  
Though these have sham'd all th' ancients, and might raise  
Their author's merit with a crown of bays,  
Yet these sometimes, even at a friend's desire  
Acted, have scarce defray'd the sea coal fire,  
And door-keepers; when, let but Falstaff come,  
Hal, Poins, the rest,—you scarce shall have a room,  
All is so pester'd; let but Beatrice  
And Benedick be seen, lo! in a trice  
The cock-pit, galleries, boxes, all are full,  
To hear Malvolio that cross garter'd gull.  
Brief, there is nothing in his wit-fraught book  
Whose sound we would not hear, on whose worth look:



Like old coin'd gold, whose lines, in every page,  
Shall pass true current to succeeding age." \*

It is folly to say that the writings of such a man need notes and comments to enable readers of ordinary intelligence to apprehend their full meaning. There is no pretence for the intrusion of such aids, except the fact that Shakespeare wrote two hundred and fifty years ago; and this seems to be but a pretence; for who needs, for as much as a word in a play, even the glossary which is most superfluously appended to almost every edition of the Poet's works? I believe that for even the least learned of those who can appreciate Shakespeare at all, there is not necessity for more than a half a score of brief notes to each play; and these, purely historical or antiquarian in their character.

I must not be understood as seeking to derogate from the value of critical writing upon the works of Shakespeare; for in that department of literature there exist some of the most delightful essays in our language. My objections are to notes upon his pages, or elsewhere, the professed object of which is to enable the reader to understand the text and apprehend the poetical beauty of the thoughts. These are in almost every instance useless and impertinent: the reader who cannot appreciate Shakespeare without them can do no better with them; and to all others they are either a stumbling-block or foolishness.

\* These lines are prefixed to the spurious edition of Shakespeare's Poems, published in 1640. As I know of no copy of that rare volume in this country, I am obliged to quote at second hand from the Variorum Shakespeare, vol. 1. p. 487.

Let me give two examples here. In quoting this passage from *Antony and Cleopatra*, in which the Queen having fainted upon the body of *Antony* is aroused by the cries of her women,

" *Iraa.*                                      Royal Egypt—empress!

*Cleo.* No more ; but e'en a woman, and commanded,  
By such poor passion as the maid that milks,  
And does the meanest chores."

Mrs. Jameson adds in a note—"Cleopatra replies "to the first word she hears on recovering her senses, "'No more *an empress*, but e'en a woman.'" Did Mrs. Jameson suppose that any one who could appreciate her charming book could fail to understand such a passage at the first glance? In the same play Dr. Johnson has a note upon this speech of *Cleopatra's*:

"Your wife, Octavia, with her modest eyes  
And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour,  
Demuring upon me."

The lexicographer informs us that "still conclusion" is 'sedate determination.' What is this but to substitute a water color sketch for an oil painting?

There are certain passages in his plays, and to Shakespeare's glory and our delight they are many, to appreciate the full force of which we must have gone sympathetically on with the poet, and have reached them in the same mood with him. Otherwise we breathe a different air, scan a narrower horizon. The man who stands upon the level of literal prose cannot see the vast, far-stretching, ten-

der-hued beauties which his glance takes in who has been borne into mid air upon the wings of Poesy. Such passages as these, it has been, and even yet is, the fashion to pick out and condemn as obscure, nonsensical, contradictory. The critics would do well to remember what Shakespeare's contemporary, good Dean Donne, quaintly says in his *Newes from the very Countrey*, "That Sentences in Authors, like haire in horse-tailes, concur in one root of beauty and strength; but being pluckt out one by one, serve only for sprindges and snares." In these snares which the commentators make, they themselves are caught. Shakespeare's plays were written only to be acted; not to be read; and one reason why his audiences found no obscurity in them was that they came to the understanding of a passage after hearing all that had preceded it. The poet had communicated to their minds a glow kindred to that which fired his imagination; and thus, as he wrote, so were they able to "apprehend, more than cool reason ever comprehends." Those who cannot read his plays in the same spirit should never undertake to criticise them. As to the most eminent of his editors in the last century, the baleful influence of whose labors has not yet passed away, they themselves have left us the best reasons for concluding that often, and in the homelier and simpler as well as in the grander and more highly wrought manifestations of his genius, he appealed to sympathies which they did not possess and uttered thoughts which they could not apprehend, in a language which they did not understand.

It is not improbable that the confession of Byron to Moore, when the latter applied to him to explain an incomprehensible passage,—that he knew what he meant when he wrote it, but could not tell then, gives us an insight into the origin of some of the very few obscure passages in Shakespeare's plays, and that if asked to be his own commentator, he, like the poet nearest akin to him of all his countrymen, in the vigor, grandeur, and picturesqueness of his style, might not himself be able to recollect exactly the idea which in the heat of composition had flashed across his mind. There is a pertinent meaning, too, in the story of the old Scotchwoman, who, when her pastor remarked that she had been very attentive to his morning sermon, and asked if she understood it all, dropped a courtesy and replied, "Wad I hae the presumption, Sir?" There was not more difference between her mind and that of the clergyman, than between ours and Shakespeare's; and is it not better when the obscurity of a passage is not obviously due to typographical errors, to allow it to stand unchanged, and to admit that it is possible that he might have written that which we will not "hae the presumption" to suppose that we can understand?

And there is yet another reason, why these passages should be allowed to remain undisturbed, which will commend itself to every man who has written for the press. It is not uncommon for a sentence to come to us in the first proof so utterly confused, that we ourselves, without the assistance of

our manuscript, cannot correct what we wrote perhaps a day, perhaps a few hours before. It would be strange, indeed, if this had not occurred more than once in the setting up of the first folio,—a volume of nearly one thousand pages, the proofs of very few of which were read at all. In such cases conjectural emendation is equally presumptuous and hopeless.

But in those passages, the clear, calm, well connected flow of which is obstructed only by a single obstinate word or phrase, and the confusion of which is therefore obviously due to accident, we must seek the integrity of the text by conjectural emendation. The proper manner of performing this task will be acknowledged by you, or any other who has filled an editor's chair, to be simply the seeking of the word which best fulfils the conditions of consonance with the context, conformity with the character of Shakespeare's style and the phraseology of his day, and similarity to the trace of the letters in the corrupted passage. Theobald said well, that "in conjectural criticism, as in mechanics, the perfection of the art consists in producing a given effect with the least possible force;" and it is to his practice upon this sensible theory, that we owe his many happy restorations of the text of Shakespeare. From a contrary course, resulted the travesties of Shakespeare's works which have been published under the sanction of great names. It has been the practice of editors to give the reading which they *preferred*; and that this disposition has not died out, is shown by a passage in the *North British Review* for February,

1854, in a paper upon Mr. Collier's recent edition of Shakespeare,—a passage which is but a fair specimen of the critical school to which it belongs. The Reviewer is speaking of those lines in *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 6, in which *Banquo* says of the martlet,

"Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed  
The air is delicate."

In the folio, for 'most' we have *must*,—a mere typographical error, which any proof reader would correct and ask no questions. But, says the Reviewer, "Mr. Collier in his new edition has 'Where they *much* breed,' whether upon the authority of "his manuscript annotator does not appear. *Much* "we should think very likely to be the true word. "*Most* was Rowe's conjectural emendation." It does not seem to have occurred to the writer that there was no question of whether he thought this or that "very likely to be the true word." If we even go so far as to suppose that *much* and *most* are equally adapted to the context, the former requires the change of two letters in the original text, while the latter changes but one, and must therefore, as it gives an appropriate sense, be received without question.

Of a similar kind is the error into which the author of a skilfully prepared paper, in the *North American Review* for April, 1854, falls,—an error in which he but goes astray with some of those who have judged themselves not unfit to become Shakespeare's editors. He admits that it is better not to disturb certain passages, such as,

"Put out the light, and then—put out the light!"

"If 'twere done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well,  
'It were done quickly,"

*Gadshill's* "burgomasters and great oneyers," and *Dogberry's* description of himself as "a rich fellow and one that hath had losses," on the ground that, "the expressions have become consecrated, as it were, in the mind of every loving admirer of Shakespeare, and he will resist to the death any change in them." He goes on to say—"A similar feeling (it would be too harsh to call it prejudice) exists with regard to many expressions in the common English version of the Scriptures which might be profitably amended, as they are either ungrammatical, incorrect or obsolete." Is it not deplorable that intelligent men should advocate the retention of a phrase in Shakespeare's works, not on the grounds that we have the best authority to believe it his and that it conveys a sense consistent with the context, but because people have become used to it! Our Bible is a translation; and if any man be displeased with the "ungrammatical, incorrect and obsolete" expressions in it, and think that he can make a better, he may do it, and welcome: nay there is no canon, literary or ecclesiastical, to prevent the North American Reviewer himself from undertaking the task, which he would doubtless perform with ability and taste. But what has this to do with the condition of the text of Shakespeare,—an original work? If according to the best evidence

we can obtain, he sometimes wrote in a manner which, judged by our standards of to-day, is ungrammatical, incorrect and obsolete, are we to be restrained from correcting his lapses, softening his asperities, and modernizing his style only because his words "have become consecrated?" It is well that there is even this restraint upon amending hands, although it is but secondary and inferior. The higher and paramount objection to such emendation is that, correct or incorrect, Shakespeare has the right to utter his own thoughts in his own words, and that we who read him have a right to his words as exactly as they can be ascertained for us. *Hamlet* says,

"Unhand me, gentlemen,—  
By heaven! I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!"

Is it only because we are accustomed to the exclamation in this form, that we should refrain from modernizing one word in it, (now hardly used except in a sense directly opposed to that in which *Hamlet* uses it,) and reading,

"By heaven! I'll make a ghost of him that *stays* me!"

Tush! we want the text that Shakespeare wrote, with all its odor of antiquity—say rather, of perennial freshness,—about it. We seek Shakespeare's words, not something better or more modern; and not only taste but justice supports our claims. His editors and verbal critics, now that he is dead, have no more right to take away his words from him, be-



cause they are obsolete, than some dashing Paul's man of his day had the right to 'convey' his handkerchief, because it was of the last year's fashion. Such changes are felonies in the commonwealth of letters; and to defend or palliate them is next in guilt to committing them.

In addition to the bold corruptions of his text by editors of past days, and which were in a great measure, though not thoroughly, purged by the labors of Mr. Knight and Mr. Collier, the readers of Shakespeare have been, and even in the editions of these gentlemen, are yet obliged to endure the presence of notes upon his pages, the object of which would seem beyond the reach of conjecture; for they accomplish nothing but the iteration or dilution of an idea, which the original expresses in terms too unequivocal to admit of a moment's doubt in any sane mind. In this style of annotation a passage in the *Paradise Lost* which describes *Raphael's* visit to Eden would be treated after this fashion.—

"A while discourse they hold;  
No feare lest dinner coole; when thus began  
Our Authour."

*Book V. 395.*

'It should be remarked that in the words, 'when thus began *our author*,' Milton does not refer to 'himself; for although his editors and biographers, 'in speaking of him, call him 'our author,' he could 'hardly thus designate himself in his own verse. We 'boldly stake our critical reputation upon the asser-

'tion, that by 'our authour' Milton means *Adam*,  
'whom he thus calls the author of the human race ;  
'and should any envious editor or critic object that  
'this would make Adam responsible for a more vo-  
'luminous and miscellaneous issue than was ever due  
'to any other author, we pass by the narrow-minded  
'suggestion in silent contempt. We confess that  
'we pride ourselves not a little, though modestly,  
'upon this construction of the passage ; which,  
'strange to say, has been passed over without a  
'note by Hume, Addison, Tickell, Newton, Richard-  
'son, Todd, Brydges, and in fact all the editors and  
'critics of the poet.' You will not find this note  
in any edition of Milton with which I am acquaint-  
ed ; but in the Variorum Shakespeare you will meet  
with innumerable comments like it ; and even in  
more recent editions there are too many which are  
near akin to it.

But although I would defend the text of Shake-  
speare from mutilation, and although the words  
of the original folio seem to me to have been need-  
lessly and therefore insufferably changed in many  
instances, I would not slight the labors of those  
who have heretofore endeavored to bring order out  
of the confusion which the printers of his plays so  
frequently made in them. On the contrary, I believe  
it to be true that we owe at least one happy and ne-  
cessary conjectural emendation of the text to every  
one of his verbal critics, except, perhaps, Becket  
and Seymour ; and I have not only endeavored to  
show that the text of the first folio is clear in many

passages which have been thought obscure and which are therefore changed in the ordinary editions, but in many others (actually many, but comparatively few) the typographical corruption of which is undeniable, I have myself proposed conjectural emendations of the text. If I have been successful where others have failed, or have detected errors of the press which have escaped the eyes of my predecessors in this field of labor, it will be only a reasonable consequence of the experience of some years in the editorial room of a leading journal, where, of course, the examination and preparation of manuscript and the conjectural correction of typographical errors is a matter of daily occurrence:—an advantage possessed, I believe, by no one of Shakespeare's editors or commentators, except in a measure by Zachary Jackson and Mr. Charles Knight; the former of whom, a printer, seems to have had no qualification for his task, except the knowledge of his craft; while the latter, a publisher, was so misled by his blind reverence for the first folio, as to devote his exertions chiefly to the defence of its manifest corruptions; which is the more to be regretted because in the few cases in which he ventured on conjectural emendation he was eminently successful. If, on the contrary, it should prove that the passages in which I have proposed emendations need no change, or that the suggestions of others are more acceptable than mine, I should be the first to rejoice; for my sole desire in this matter is the integrity of Shakespeare's text.

In the course of the volume there are many corrections brought forward from the labors of all the commentators, from Rowe to the Poet's last learned and discriminating verbal critic, the Rev. Alexander Dyce. All these, except when I have expressly opposed them, or characterized them as only plausible, have, in my opinion, an undeniable claim to a place in the text, as acceptable corrections of palpable typographical errors; and obviously needed as they, or at least the majority of them, are, they as well as the readings of the first folio which are shown to be clearly comprehensible, are not to be found in any of the current editions of Shakespeare's works. Some of these will doubtless be opposed upon the plea of conservatism. Many will exclaim, 'Do not disturb the old readings: the old text is consecrated!' This feeling must win our respect in all cases, and command our sympathy and co-operation in those in which it really applies to Shakespeare's words, as they are given to us in the authentic edition. But such cases as the last are of extremely rare occurrence; and the veneration which Shakespeare's readers think is awakened in their minds by his words, is, in these cases, as in many others, excited by needless or indefensible changes introduced into his text by Pope, or Warburton, or Johnson, or Capell, or Malone, or other less distinguished editors, or even by accident, and the venerability of which is perhaps a hundred, perhaps fifty years of age.

An example will make this clear. In *Antony*

and *Cleopatra*, Act II. Sc. 2, *Antony*, speaking of his frampold wife, says :

"So much uncurbable her garboils, *Cæsar*,  
Made out of her impatience," &c.

But in all the editions in ordinary use by the present and last generations, the first line is printed,

"So much *uncurable* her garboils, &c.

It so appears in Chalmers' Edition, in Singer's, in Moxon's, &c., &c., &c. Mr. Collier and Mr. Knight have restored the reading of the original, which indeed was not disturbed until the present century. Why it was disturbed is a mystery. "Garboils" means 'brawlings,' 'uproars,' 'tantrums,' and is translated, '*barbuglio*,' '*ripetto*,' in the Italian Dictionary of Shakespeare's contemporary, Florio. What most people would call the old text probably came into being through the agency of some over wise compositor, who, able to understand only the last syllable of this word, supposed *Fulvia* to need a plaster upon her person rather than a restraint upon her passions ; and so changed "uncurbable" into *uncurable* in some prominent edition, which was followed blindly for a quarter of a century.

Our conservatism too often consists in mere tenacity of that to which we have been accustomed. It is one thing to shrink from touching Shakespeare's text, but quite another to hesitate to remove the

words of Pope or Warburton, or others of inferior name, in order to restore those which appear in the authentic copy, or to substitute others more in accordance with the tone of Shakespeare's thought, the phraseology of his time, and the trace of the letters in the corrupted text. The conservatism which loves and venerates that which is right the more because it is old, appeals to the strongest and purest feelings of the human heart; it is not only virtue in the good, but wisdom in the wise. But that sort of conservatism which clings to a hoary evil merely because it has grown old in wrong, is equally vicious and foolish; for it not only perpetuates wrong, but provokes and almost justifies that innovation, which will root out all that is old,—the good with the evil. Let us shun such conservatism in editing the works of Shakespeare, if we would not see his thoughts diluted to the taste of the feeblest palates, and his phraseology tortured out of its antique, but never antiquated, grace and grandeur by the reforming hands whose ruthless strength such a course would provoke to action. Such are the feelings with which I have come to the critical study of Shakespeare's text, and which have influenced the character of the succeeding pages; and hence it is that in many passages, which seem to me beyond all question corrupt, although they have been printed and read without a question for generations, I have not hesitated to point out the error and the remedy which occurred to me, while at the same

time I merely suggest my corrections for the consideration of my fellow-students.

The quotations are given at greater length than is usual in works of verbal criticism, because this volume is not especially addressed to critics, who are supposed to know the context of all passages the reading of which is in dispute ; and as to others, in the words of Mrs. Jameson—in the Preface to her delightful *Characteristics of Women*, which I read for the first time just before writing this letter—"it  
"the memory fail at the moment to recall the lines  
"or the sentiment to which the attention is directly required, few like to interrupt the course of  
"thought, or undertake a journey from the sofa or  
"the garden seat to the library, to hunt out the volume, the play, the passage for themselves."

The antiquarian style of editing has been opposed and ridiculed by many. I cannot give it my highest respect, especially when it tempts a man of Mr. Dyce's taste into such needless displays of reading of worthless books as abound in his otherwise admirable recent publication, in which instance upon instance from old volumes in all modern languages is heaped upon Shakespeare's text without illustrating it. But this is only the abuse of that which has its use. Mr. Dyce's own reading, as well as that of his predecessors, has thrown light on many passages in the works of Shakespeare and our elder dramatists ; and in the recent discussions upon the authority of the emendations in Mr. Collier's folio, a

knowledge of the inferior literature of Shakespeare's day can be, and has been, used with great effect upon the pretensions of that volume. I will here, by way of illustration, and because, having mislaid my memorandum, it escaped me in the preparation of my own argument against Mr. Collier's folio and of this volume, mention a forgotten passage which is of much value in Shakesperian literature. You will remember that in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act I. Sc. 3, *Falstaff* says of *Mrs. Ford*, "I spy entertainment in her: she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation." The corrector of Mr. Collier's folio, being unable, like most people nowadays, to apprehend the force of the phrase "she carves," changed it to "she *craves*;" and so did Zachary Jackson thirty-five years ago. But Mr. Hunter and Mr. Dyce have quoted from authors of Shakespeare's day, several instances of the use of the word, in the sense of 'propitiating.' They do not, however, arrive at the exact meaning; and Mr. Dyce remarks: "whatever was its exact nature it would appear \* \* \* to have been a sort of salutation which "was practised more especially at table." But the reappearance of my forgotten memorandum enables me to show exactly what this sort of carving was, and how it was performed. In the satirical description of *A very Woman*, which occurs among the *Characters* appended to Sir Thomas Overbury's *Wife*—and it is one of the most graphic, quaint and pungent among them—the description of the married part of her life begins thus: "Her lightnesse gets her to swim at



"top of the table, where her wrie little finger be-  
 "wraies *carving*; her neighbors at the latter end  
 "know they are welcome, and for that purpose she  
 "quencheth her thirst." Sig. E. 3, Ed. 1632. Carv-  
 ing, then, was a sign of intelligence, made with the  
 little finger as the glass was raised to the mouth.  
 It is remarkable, by the way, that ladies do this  
 now-a-days infinitely more than gentlemen. Is it  
 possible that the trick has survived, while its mean-  
 ing is lost? But the value of this passage to the  
 Shakesperian scholar is, that it shows the ignorance  
 of the corrector of Mr. Collier's folio with regard to  
 a word and a custom in vogue at the date of the  
 edition on which he made his changes; and therefore  
 furnishes another incontestable proof of the much  
 later date of his labors, and of his unfitness for them.

A few of the following pages are devoted to an  
 examination of the grounds upon which authority can  
 be claimed for Mr. Collier's notorious and curious  
 volume. I need not point out to you that this is  
 not, and does not attempt to be, a detailed approval  
 or disapproval of such of the changes in the text  
 of that volume as have been made public by Mr.  
 Collier, but is purely an argument which aims to  
 show, that those emendations were made in such a  
 way and at such a time that, as to their authority,  
 they are utterly without any claim upon our defer-  
 ence. I have been both publicly and privately cen-  
 sured by Shakesperian enthusiasts for too great con-  
 sideration towards Mr. Collier, even when most  
 severe upon the changes which he advocates. But

although I am willing to confess, that I have always supposed that gentleman's qualifications as an editor of Shakespeare to consist rather in great learning in the antiquities of English Poetry and the Drama than in sympathetic appreciation of his author, and that his *Notes and Emendations* confirmed and deepened that opinion, I certainly need not excuse myself for consideration or even deference (little enough through excess of zeal I fear), shown to one who had previously rendered such good service to Shakespeare and the Drama, and who had taken a respectable position in critical literature before I was born.\*

Not only the text and the commentators, but some of the characters of Shakespeare are considered in these pages. Acquit me however, in advance, of a presumptuous desire to thrust myself between Shakespeare and the spontaneous admiration of such of his readers as happen to be mine. It is only in the hope of correcting the false teachings of the stage and the commentators that I have ventured upon an analysis of Shakespeare's marvellous creations. The conventional personages of the former and the stereotyped traditions of the latter have almost extinguished, for the mass of the public, many of Shakespeare's most truthful and finished characters. *Jacques*, *Isabella*, and *Richard III.* are prominent examples; but there are others almost equally striking. I have merely endeavored to show these characters

\* The Poetical Decameron. By J. P. Collier. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1820



as Shakespeare drew them, in opposition to the distorted images of them which hold possession of the public eye, seen through the perverting medium of the playwrights and the commentators. And here justice requires that the Shakesperian representations which Mr. Burton has given at his theatre during the last two years should not only be exempted from such censure, but receive,—if my poor pen may be deemed worthy to bestow it,—the warm approbation of all lovers of Shakespeare for their unexampled faithfulness to the letter and the spirit of the great dramatist.

But enough of this, and too much; and yet I have said nothing which it did not seem as if I must say, if I broke silence at all. That that which I have just written and that which lies beyond this threshold is not needless, let this dictum of Hallam's, written only fifteen years ago, bear witness: "We learn Shakespeare, in fact, as we learn a language, or as we read a difficult passage in Greek, with the eye glancing on the commentary; and it is only after much study, that we come to forget a part, it can be but a part, of the perplexities he has caused us." *Introd. to the Lit. of Europe*. Part III. Chap. vi. 52. Now, with all due deference to such eminent opinion, I never had need to go to that school; and when I did go, it was in the teaching of the expounders, and not in the words of the great master that I found the perplexities. Do you ask,—have I the conceit to suppose that I am alone in this? Far from it. You are with me; and it is

because I feel, because I know, that there are thousands and hundreds of thousands like us, and because we have yet had no representative voice in the critical Senate, that I, failing abler hands, have written this book. And the fact that you thus understand and thus feel Shakespeare, while you have not to your many accomplishments added the speciality of Shakesperian scholarship, is an additional reason why I should take such an occasion as this to assure you that,

I am, my dear Howadji,

Ever faithfully,

Your Friend and Servant,

RICHARD GRANT WHITE.

178 East 18th street,  
New-York, April 28, 1854.

## NOTE.

Many of the notes and comments in this volume were written three years ago, during the study of the commentators, but before I possessed a copy of the *Variorum Shakespeare*, and also, of course, before the present revival of attention to Shakesperian literature. During my subsequent progress through the *Variorum*, and the works of the commentators of the present day, I found, as it was inevitable that I should, that my conjectures and conclusions had sometimes been anticipated, though not as often as I expected. In some of these cases I cancelled the record of my own labors ; but in others, in which there was difference as well as coincidence, or in which I had given reasons for my opinion which had not occurred to others, I allowed such notes to stand, giving due credit to my predecessor. The Notes and Comments are strictly, though in part only, a record of my Shakesperian studies ; and I determined not to change their form. In all cases in which I have not stated at first that an opinion or a conjectural emendation is the suggestion of another, it is original with myself. I care very little about this sort of credit, being quite content if Shake-

speare's text be protected and restored by any hands ; but I have scrupulously respected the rights of others ; and, in the recent words of a far more learned Shakesperian scholar than I shall ever be,—Mr. Collier, “if, in any instance, I have not stated that a proposed emendation has been previously suggested, it has arisen from my ignorance of the fact or from pure inadvertence.”

And I should here say, that in reading Mrs. Jameson's *Characteristics of Women* I at last found one who at least suspects—what it seemed to me no one could be blind to,—that *Beatrice* loves *Benedick* when *Much Ado about Nothing* opens. This reminded me that somewhere in the following volume there is an expression of my surprise that this keystone and clue of the comedy had not been discovered by any of those who had made it the subject of analytical comment.

Not a little of the more recent desultory and occasional Shakesperian discussion appears to have been carried on in the London serial publication called *Notes and Queries*, which, judging by the few numbers I have seen, seems to be well described in the *North British Review* for February, 1854, as “a *melange* of the public knowledge and ignorance, sense and folly, on all sides of all questions.” I have in vain tried to procure this : half a dozen old odd numbers, picked up here and there, and a set for 1853, lacking November and December, received while this volume was passing through the press, are all that I have been able to obtain. This statement may possibly be necessary to excuse my neglect to give due credit to some contributor to that literary alms-basket.

I cannot allow this sheet to go to press without a record of my acknowledgments to two gentlemen who have materially aided me in the studies of which this volume is the result. First, to William E. Burton, Esq., known to the

public as a man of letters, an actor of genius, a successful and liberal manager, and a devoted Shakesperian student, I am indebted for his kindness in opening to me without reserve the rich treasures of his Shakesperian and Dramatic library, and, indeed, for the transfer to my own shelves, in a spirit that "made the things more rich," of needful volumes which I might have sought for long in vain. To his knowledge and experience I also owe some valuable suggestions. From Joseph Cogswell, LL. D. Superintendent of the Astor Library, I have continually received all the assistance which it was in his power to give, and far more than I had any right or reason to expect. Even while the noble collection of books which he had projected, and to the gathering together of which he has devoted himself with such singleness of purpose, directed by various learning, was inchoate, almost chaotic, I found him ever ready, at no little sacrifice of personal convenience, to place whatever was within his reach also within mine, whether it was a book or the fruits of his own extended study.

To the Hon. George Lunt, of Boston, I am indebted for several favors and kind suggestions, and to President Anderson, D. D., LL. D., of Geneva College, for a useful hint. I have to thank William C. Conant, Esq., of this city, for the benefit of his assistance on more than one occasion ; and when I add that the name of my correspondent in Portland, Me., is George W. Eveleth, I believe that I have absolved myself of all the pleasant duties of this kind which friendship and courtesy have imposed upon me.





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## ERRATA.

The author has not been able to examine the sheets of this volume, for the purpose of preparing a list of errata, from which, however, he trusts that it will be found tolerably free; but, in glancing over its pages, he has noticed the following, which are the results of oversight in finishing the stereotype plates:

Page 94, line 17—for "wis," read *wise*.

Page 120, line 16—for "d," read *do*.

Page 231, "In," which stands alone about the middle of the page, should be obliterated.

Page 236, "p. 236," on the right-hand side, near the bottom, should be obliterated.

Page 255, at the top of the page, *for* should be inserted between the first and second lines.

Page 257, "11," at the end of the last line, should be obliterated.

Page 281, *meaning* should be inserted between the last two lines.

Page 406, "8217," at the beginning of the seventh line, should be obliterated.

Page 406, *for* should be inserted between the first and second lines.

Page 472, "Boswell," after the tenth line, should be obliterated.

*Richard II.*, *Henry IV.* Part I. and Part II., *Henry V.*, *Henry VI.* Part II. and Part III., *Richard III.*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Pericles*, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Hamlet*, were printed in quarto form during his lifetime. The copies of most of these plays used by the printer were, almost without doubt, surreptitiously obtained, and they are of comparatively little authority in determining the text; their office being merely auxiliary. It is worthy of notice here, that such was the value of Shakespeare's name, such his indifference to his dramatic reputation outside the theatre, and such the impunity of the press in his time, that during his life six other plays were also published under his name, which there are no grounds for receiving as his, which were repudiated by his first editors,—his fellow players and business partners in the theatre,—and which have been rejected by all his subsequent editors, except Nicholas Rowe.

In 1623, seven years after his death, the first collected edition of Shakespeare's Plays was published in folio, under the title, "Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories and Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies." This is known in Shakesperian literature as the first folio; and it is the only admitted authority for the text of his Dramatic Works. It contains all his plays except one: nineteen which had been surreptitiously or carelessly printed before its publication (one,—*Othello*,—having been published in quarto after his death), and seventeen which appeared in it for the first time. The play not included, is *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*; and it is conjectured that the refusal of the holder of the copyright of that play to part with it, or to come into the enterprise of publishing the first folio, caused its omission. The Preface of the editors of this first folio,—who, it should be constantly remembered, were Shakespeare's friends, fellow-

actors, and joint theatrical proprietors,—shows beyond all cavil, it would seem, that the publication was made, as its title professes that it was, “according to the true original copies,” and that it has an unquestionable claim to implicit deference from the editors of subsequent editions, except in those instances in which illegible manuscript or careless proof-reading has palpably obscured or perverted the author’s meaning. John Heminge and Henry Condell say with regard to their labor of love :—

“It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthy to have bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liv’d to haue set forth, and ouerseen his owne writings: But since it hath bin ordain’d otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his friends the office of their care and paine, to have collected and publish’d them: and so to haue publish’d them, as where (before) *you were abus’d with diuerse stolne and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the fraudes and stealthes of injurious impostors*, that expos’d them: even those are now offer’d to your view cur’d and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. *His mind and hand went together*; and what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that *we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.*”

Few readers of Shakespeare can have failed to peruse this Preface, which appears in nearly every edition of his works; but the above extract from it deserves to be ever present in the minds of all who come to the critical consideration of his text. Indeed, such is the authority of this first folio, that had it been printed with ordinary care, there would have been no appeal from its text; and editorial labors in the publication of Shakespeare’s works, except from such as might think it necessary and proper to obtrude explanatory notes and critical comments upon his

readers, would have been not only without justification but without opportunity. But, unfortunately, this precious folio is one of the worst printed books that ever issued from the press. It is filled with the grossest possible errors in orthography, punctuation, and arrangement. It is not surprising that Mr. Collier estimates the corrections of "minor errors,"—that is, of mere palpable misspelling and mispunctuation, in his amended folio, at *twenty thousand*. The first folio must contain quite as many such blunders ; and the second is worse in this respect than the first. But beside minor errors, the correction of which is obvious, words are so transformed as to be past recognition, even with the aid of the context ; lines are transposed ; sentences are sometimes broken by a full point followed by a capital letter, and at other times have their members displaced and mingled in incomprehensible confusion ; verse is printed as prose, and prose as verse ; speeches belonging to one character are given to another ; and, in brief, all the possible varieties of typographical derangement abound in that volume, in the careful printing of which of all others, save one, the world was most interested. This it is which has made the labors of careful and learned editors necessary for the text of Shakespeare ; and which has furnished the excuse for the exhibition of more pedantry, foolishness, conceit, and presumption than have been exhibited upon any other subject,—always excepting that of Religion ; but with this advantage as to time on the side of the Shakesperian commentators,—that their follies have been perpetrated within one hundred and fifty years, while the labors of commentators upon the Bible have extended through more than fifteen hundred.

The cost of the first folio was £1, equal to about five at the present day, that is, about twenty-five dollars ; and it is a pleasing proof of the esteem in which the works of



Shakespeare were held at a period so nearly contemporaneous with him, that in spite of the numerous quarto copies of many plays, the comparatively small class which furnished purchasers, or even readers, and the rapid increase of the Puritanic school, which taught abhorrence of all stage-plays as an essential of its practice, a second folio was published nine years afterwards, in 1632. It is upon a copy of this edition, known to Shakesperian students as the second folio, that the manuscript emendations of the text which Mr. Collier advocates are made. This second folio is, in effect, but little more than a paginal reprint of the first. Comparatively few of the typographical errors of the first are corrected in the second, and not only are the remainder faithfully reproduced, but to them are added many others equally grave and confusing. In the very points, therefore, in which the text of the first folio is faulty, that of the second is much worse; and it is important to remember this in the consideration of the subject before us.

It is not surprising, that during the Commonwealth Shakespeare's Plays were not reprinted; but in 1664 a third folio was issued, containing, in addition to those which had appeared in the two previous folios, *Pericles* and the six spurious plays which had been published as Shakespeare's during his life. The fourth folio appeared in 1685. Its contents are the same as those of the third. Neither of the two later folios are of the slightest authority in determining the text of Shakespeare; and the second is only of service in those instances in which it corrects typographical errors in the first.

Up to this time Shakespeare had gained or suffered from no other editing but that of his brother players, which seems to have been limited to collecting his manuscripts, placing them in the printer's hands, and writing the Dedication and Preface to the volume. In the seventeenth cen-

ture there was no verbal criticism upon his text ; but his style and matter, and the construction of his plays, were made the subjects of incidental comment and discussion by Mr. Thomas Rymer, Mr. Jeremiah Collier,\* Mr. John Dennis, and an anonymous opponent of the second-named gentleman.†

In the year 1709, Shakespeare's Plays, "Revised and Corrected, with an account of his Life and Writings, by N. [icholas] Rowe," were published, in seven vols. 8vo. This edition contains all of the received plays, besides the six which are accounted apocryphal. Shakespeare had now for the first time an editor, in the proper sense of the word. Rowe was a poet of merit, a man of excellent sense, a scholar, and, withal, a modest and somewhat painstaking editor ; and the fruit of his labors was a great improvement in the text of Shakespeare. A large number of the grosser blunders which deform the previous impressions disappeared under his pen ; and it is remarkable that some of the very emendations which appear upon the margin of Mr. Collier's copy of the folio of 1632, and the credit of which that gentleman claims for his manuscript corrector, are to be found in this, the first critically prepared edition of Shakespeare's works. The fact is significant, both as regards the manuscript corrector and his advocate ; for it shows that no "higher authority" than the conjectural abil-

\* "A Short View of the Immorality & Profaneness of the English Stage: Together with the Sense of Antiquity upon this Subject. By Jeremy Collier, M. A. 8vo. London, 1698."

† "The Antient & Modern Stages survey'd. Or, Mr. Collier's view of the Immorality & Profaneness of the English Stage set in a True Light, &c. 8vo. London, 1699."

Neither of these books is enumerated in Mr. Halliwell's very serviceable Catalogue of Shakesperiana ; though they certainly present claims to such notice equal, at least, to those of other volumes the titles of which Mr. Halliwell has recorded.

ity of a clever and well educated man was necessary to their production ; and it also shows that Mr. Collier has issued his book of Notes and Emendations without that careful investigation which the subject demanded, and which the public had a right to expect at his hands.

Rowe was succeeded, as an editor of Shakespeare, by Pope, who published a superb edition, in six volumes, quarto, in 1725. Pope, like most of those authors of eminence in other departments of literature, who have undertaken to regulate the text of Shakespeare, made a very poor editor. He used the quartos somewhat to the advantage, but more to the detriment of his author ; foisting into the text that which Shakespeare himself had rejected. He gave us a few good, and several very pretty and plausible conjectural emendations of typographical errors ; but he added to these so many which were only exponents of his own conceit and want of kindred appreciation of Shakespeare's genius, that his text, as a whole, is one of the poorest which remain to us.

Theobald, "poor, piddling Tibbald," the first hero of his *Dunciad*, came after Pope, and is one of the very best editors who have fallen to the lot of Shakespeare. He was the first who did any great service by conjectural emendation, and the judicious use of the quartos. He issued first, "Shakespeare Restored ; or a Specimen of the Many Errors, as well committed as unamended, in Pope's edition of this Poet," quarto, 1726,—a publication which Pope never forgave,—and in 1733 his edition of Shakespeare was published, in seven volumes, 8vo. It was by far the best text of Shakespeare which had appeared, and a great number of its conjectural emendations of typographical errors remain undisturbed to this day.

To Theobald, succeeded Sir Thomas Hanmer, Baronet (as *Inspector Bucket* would say), who published an edition,

splendid for the day, in six volumes, quarto, at Oxford, in 1744. Hanmer was an accomplished gentleman, and a man of taste. He did something to better, and somewhat more to injure the text as Theobald had left it. His labors were received with favor ; but he was indebted for his success rather to fashion than to any remarkable merit, and his edition is rarely consulted ; the few received, or favorably regarded emendations which he proposed being perpetuated in the text or in the notes of other editors. It should be noticed here, that many of Hanmer's questionable readings, and some which are regarded as inadmissible, are found among those the credit of which Mr. Collier claims for his manuscript corrector.

Hanmer's edition was followed, in 1747, by Bishop Warburton's. This prelate, not then mitred, was undeniably learned and able ; but he was as undeniably assuming and arrogant in his personal demeanor, and he treated Shakespeare's works as he probably would have treated the player himself, had he been his contemporary. He set himself not so much to correcting the text, as to amending the writings of Shakespeare. His tone is that of haughty flippancy. Does he find a passage in which the thought, or the expression of William Shakespeare is at variance with the judgment of William Warburton ?—he immediately alters it to suit the taste of that distinguished scholar and divine, saying : “ Without a doubt, Shakespeare wrote, or meant, thus.” For instance, of the fine line in Hamlet,

“ Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,”

he says :

“ Without question Shakspeare wrote,

— ‘ against *assail* of troubles,’

i. e. assault.”

Again, in the following passage, from *As You Like It*,

where, in the second Scene of the first Act, *Celia*, dissuading *Orlando* from the encounter with the *Duke's* wrestler, says to him :

“ If you saw yourself with your eyes, and knew yourself with your judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise.”

Warburton says :

“ ‘ If you saw yourself with your eyes, and knew yourself with your judgment.’ Absurd! The sense requires that we should read *our* eyes, *our* judgment.”

It seems not to have occurred to the editor that the sense might be,

“ If you saw yourself with your *eyes*, and knew yourself with your *judgment* :”

and as this solution did not occur to him, he, of course, cuts the knot, and mutilates the text. So, again, in the same play, the impatient *Rosalind* says :

“ One inch of delay is a South Sea of discovery :”

a phrase vivid with meaning ; but Warburton says of it :

“ This is stark nonsense ! we must read, *off* discovery.”

*Rosalind* talks of *Orlando's* kissing—

“ His kissing is as full of sanctity as the touch of holy bread.”

This does not suit Warburton, who remarks :

“ We should read *beard*, [instead of bread ;] that is, as the kiss of an holy saint, or hermit, called the kiss of charity. This makes one comparison just and decent ; the other, impious and absurd.”

One more example from the same play. The *Duke* asks *Orlando* if he believes that *Rosalind* can do what she promised, and the latter replies :

"I sometimes do believe, and sometimes do not,  
As those that fear they hope, and know they fear."

Of the last line of which, Warburton says :

" This strange nonsense should be read thus :

" 'As those that *fear their hap*, and know *their fear*.' "

This was reckless editing ; and it soon brought forward defenders of the integrity of Shakespeare's text. But, like all his predecessors, and nearly all of his successors, Bishop Warburton left, in his heaps of editorial chaff, some grains of sense, which have been carefully winnowed out and garnered up in that storehouse of Shakesperian lore, the *Variorum* edition, which will hereafter claim our attention.

In 1745 had appeared a duodecimo volume, entitled "Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, with remarks on Sir T. H.'s [Sir Thomas Hanmer's] edition of Shakespear ; to which is affixed, proposals for a new edition of Shakespear, with a specimen." It was written, as its author might have said, with combined perspicuity of thought, and ponderosity of language. It was by Samuel Johnson, then rapidly rising to the highest position in the world of letters ; and, in 1765, an edition of Shakespeare, "with the corrections and illustrations of various commentators : to which are added notes, by Samuel Johnson," was published, in eight volumes, 8vo. It is giving the Doctor but little praise to say that he was a better editor than his Reverend predecessor. The majority of his emendations of the text were, nevertheless, singularly unhappy ; and his notes, though often learned and sometimes sensible, were generally wanting in just that sort of learning and sense most needful for his task. Strange as it may seem, no one who himself appreciates Shakespeare, can read Johnson's comments and verbal criticisms upon his plays without the conviction that to the 'great moralist,' the

grandest inspirations and most exquisitely wrought fancies of the great dramatist were as a sealed book. Many an humble individual whom the learned bear growled at—we do not hesitate to include even “Bozzy” himself—appreciated Shakespeare better than the literary dictator did. The Doctor did not hesitate to say, that one passage in that clever fop Congreve’s *Mourning Bride* was finer than any thing in all Shakespeare’s works. And who can forget, or forgive, the manner in which he abuses Sweet Will, when he does not understand him ; or, worse yet, the insufferable arrogance with which he patronizes him, and pats him on the head, when he does ? Who ever read, without an ebullition of wrath, this curt, savage, and pedagoguish dismissal of *Cymbeline* :

“This play has many just sentiments, some natural dialogues, and some pleasing scenes ; but they are obtained at the expense of much incongruity. To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation.”

Poor great moralist ! obtuse wise man ! ignorant Doctor of Laws ! For thee *Imogen*, that purest, that most enchanting, most noble creation,—that loveliest, most lovable, most loving, and so most womanly of women,—that peerless lady among Shakespeare’s peerless ladies, was spoken into being in vain ! In vain, for thee the glowing thoughts, the gorgeous imagery, the dainty utterance ! In vain for thee the wondrous self-development of character by dialogue and dramatic action ! In vain for thee

—“the lark at heaven’s gate sings,  
And Phœbus ’gins arise,  
His steeds to water at those springs  
On chalic’d flowers that lies.”—

for thy rectilinear vision is fixed upon "the confusion of names and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life," and, besides, "springs that lies," is ungrammatical! All the fine writing in the Doctor's high sounding preface will not atone for his treatment of Shakespeare in the body of the work. It is worth while to read here his note on the passage,

"One inch of delay is a South Sea of discovery.  
Prithee tell me, &c."

Warburton's treatment of which has just been noticed. He says:—

"This sentence is rightly noted by the commentator as nonsense, but not so happily restored to sense. I read thus: 'One inch of delay is a South Sea. Discover, I prithee, tell me, &c.'"

In the same play Johnson gravely proposes to read *Silvius'* entreaty to *Phebe*,

"Will you sterner be  
Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops!"

"Will you sterner be  
Than he that *dyes his lips* by bloody drops!"

It seems difficult to believe that the author of the *Rambler* and the *Idler* should have given us such emendations by the score; but these are favorable specimens of a large proportion of his notes; and in those very publications, criticisms occur not less deplorable to the appreciative reader of the bard of all time.

Edward Capell was one of the most learned and laborious of the editors of Shakespeare. He published in 1759 a quarto volume entitled, "Notes and various Readings of Shakespeare;" in 1768 he issued an edition of Shakespeare in ten volumes octavo; and in 1779 his "Notes and Various Readings," with many additions and the "School of



Shakespeare," were republished in three formidable quarto volumes. The critical student of Shakespeare must have these books, and, alas ! must read them. Capell's words are not without knowledge ; but they often do as much to darken counsel as has been accomplished by the most ignorant of his co-laborers. Infinite pains and trouble and the closest thinking are sometimes required, to divine what he would be at. The obscurest passage in the author whom he strives to elucidate is luminous as the sun, compared with the convoluted murkiness of his page ; and when by chance he quotes a passage for comment, as its clear significance flashes upon the mind, we involuntarily think of the people who sat in darkness and saw a great light. And yet Capell did something for the text. He too, like most of his predecessors and successors, made some conjectural emendations which at once commended themselves to the general sense of the readers of Shakespeare, and which have been preserved, while the mass of his labors are thrust aside, for rare consultation, upon the shelves of the critical or the curious. His collocation of the various readings of the old editions is invaluable for reference.

At about this period Shakesperian criticism became rampant. The publication of Warburton's edition in 1747 had provoked controversy and given new stimulus to investigation. From that day commentary trod upon the heels of commentary, and panting pamphleteers toiled on after each other in the never-ending struggle to reach the true text of Shakespeare ; a goal which seemed to recede faster than their advance. The commentators were nearly all learned men ; and many were men of remarkable ability. But their labors were almost altogether in vain. When they strove most, displayed the most learning, exercised the most ingenuity, they were most at fault : when they were successful, it was generally by chance, and upon some

point which they regarded as of little consequence. To estimate their services to the text, compared with the harm they did it, as "two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff," is to pass a lenient judgment upon their labors. There were reasons for all this. Critical Dogberys that they were, they went not the way to examine. Their learning, the school in which they had been educated, the taste of the day—formed as it was by the remnants of the French taste of Dryden's dynasty, and the chilling influence of the cold and polished correctness of the school of Addison and Pope, overlaid by the lexicographical style of Johnson,—joined to their own conceit and the want of a just appreciation of the genius of Shakespeare, led them entirely astray. They did not recognize him as their master, at whose feet they were to sit and learn. They did not go to their task in an humble, docile spirit. Milton had written,

"Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child  
Warbles his native wood notes wild ;"

a petty puling dribble of belittling, patronizing praise, for which he should never have been forgiven, had he not atoned for it by that grand line in the Epitaph,—one of the grandest and most imaginative he ever wrote,—in which he calls Shakespeare,

"Dear son of memory, great heir of fame."

But the first encomium, which might not inaptly be passed upon a missy contributor to a Ladies' Magazine, chimed with the taste of the middle of the last century ; and Shakespeare was regarded as an untutored genius, sadly in need of pruning and training ; a charming, but unsophisticated songster, whose "native wood notes wild," if their exuberance could be tamed down to the barrel-organ standard of the poet fanciers of the day, would be meet

entertainment for persons of quality,—if they were not too exacting as to the unities. In editing his works for the closet, the constant effort was, not to imbibe his spirit and touch his work with reverential hand, but to make him conform as much as possible to the standard which the critics had set up. No one of them seemed to suspect that Shakespeare could have been a law unto himself. In adapting his plays to the stage, a yet more outrageous desecration of his genius was the fashion for nearly a hundred years. The soul of Procrustes seemed to have migrated into every play-wright and stage-manager in England, from the day of the Restoration ; and Shakespeare's plays, when they were presented at all, were so curtailed, distorted, mosaicked, patched, vamped and garbled, that the original work was lost almost beyond recognition. The second Scene of the first Act of Dryden's version of the *Tempest*, actually begins :

"*Prospero.* Miranda, where is *your sister* ?

*Miranda.* I left her looking from the pointed rock," &c. ;

and in Nahum Tate's adaptation of *King Lear*, the tragedy ends in farce, and *Lear* dances at the wedding of *Cordelia* with *Edmund*. The stage library groans under heaps of these abominations ; and to this day we have not escaped their baleful influence. Although we owe much to Mr. Macready and Mr. Charles Kean in this regard, hardly a play of Shakespeare's is now put upon the stage with the dramatic sequence and the development of character preserved exactly as he left them to us. No one can complain of the omission of a few gross expressions, admissible when Shakespeare wrote, but offensive now : the grievance is, that it seems to be forgotten that Shakespeare was an actor and a manager ; that he wrote his plays to please the people and make money ; and that, his audiences being constituted of all sorts and conditions of men, *he succeeded*.

He knew what was a good acting play as well as what was good poetry ; and he knew better than any of his dramatic tinkers, not only what incidents, what action, and what dialogue and soliloquy, but what succession of events was necessary to the proper delineation of his characters. When shall we have Shakespeare edited and put upon the stage with a full recognition of his surpassing genius as a dramatist ?

This digression is but seeming ; for it is essential to the purpose of these pages, to show how Shakespeare suffered for nearly a century and a half, more wrong from the incapacity, vitiated taste, and conceit of 'ingenious' commentators and adapters, than he had previously endured from the unexampled carelessness of the printers—grievously as they had abused him. But perhaps we should rather pity than condemn those misguided people ; for they erred in ignorance. Had there not gone with their ignorance so overweening a conceit, we might get through their fine-spun absurdities and pompous platitudes with an unruffled temper. But as it is, they try us sorely.

The appearance of George Steevens and Edmund Malone in the field of Shakesperian literature, produced greater and more permanent changes in the text than had been achieved by any of their predecessors, save Theobald. They were not co-workers, but opponents. Steevens reprinted the quartos, and published notes and comments upon the text, which, in 1773, were embodied in an edition in ten octavo volumes. Steevens is one of the most acute and accomplished of Shakespeare's commentators ; but rarely have abilities and acquirements been put to more unfruitful use. To show his ability to suggest 'ingenious' readings, he wantonly rejected the obvious significance of the text, and perverted the author's meaning, or destroyed the integrity of his work. He was witty, and not only launched his

shafts at his fellow-commentators, but turned them against his author, and, most intolerable of all, attempted to substitute his own smartness for Shakespeare's humor. He had an accurate—mechanically accurate—ear, and ruthlessly mutilated, or patched up Shakespeare's lines to a uniform standard of ten syllables.

But, in Malone, he found an adversary entirely too powerful for him. Malone published in 1780, two volumes, containing notes and comments upon the text as it was left by Johnson and Steevens, and other miscellaneous Shakesperian matter ; and in 1790 appeared his edition of Shakespeare, " collated verbatim with the most authentic copies, and revised ; with the corrections and illustrations of various commentators ; to which are added, an essay on the chronological order of his plays ; an essay relative to Shakespeare and Jonson ; a dissertation on the three parts of King Henry VI. ; an historical account of the English stage ; and notes." This title gives a just idea of the wide field of Shakesperian inquiry, covered by the labors of Malone. Though not highly accomplished, he was a scholar, a man of good judgment, and, for his day, of good poetical taste. He was patient, indefatigably laborious, and modest—that is, as modest as it was possible for a Shakesperian critic and editor of the last century to be. Above all, he was honestly devoted to his task ; he sought the glory of his author, not his own—except in so far as the latter was involved in the former. We of to-day can see that he committed many and great blunders ; but he saved the text of Shakespeare from wide and ruthless outrage, and by painful and well-directed investigation into the literature and manners contemporary with his author, cast new light upon his pages. To Edmund Malone the readers of Shakespeare during the last decade of the last century, and the first quarter of this, were indebted for the preservation of his works in a condition nearly approaching their

original integrity. Malone's edition of Shakespeare, with Prolegomena, supplementary matter, and the principal notes of all the editors and commentators, published by Boswell—the son of Johnson's biographer—in twenty-one octavo volumes, in 1821, and known as the *Variorum* edition, is a monument to the industry and judgment of Malone; whose labors appear to the greatest advantage when placed beside those of his predecessors and opponents. It is, besides, a rich storehouse of Shakesperian literature; though, like most storehouses, with its treasures it preserves heaps of dross and rubbish.

To add to the editions previously mentioned, that of Alexander Chalmers, published in 1823, the text of which does not materially differ from that of Malone; that of the Rev. William Harness, published in 1825, which contained a few valuable corrections of the text; and that of Samuel Weller Singer, published at Chiswick, in 1826, the text of which was formed with great care, though not unexceptionable judgment, and with too little reverence for the authority of the first folio, and which contained some very plausible conjectural emendations, is to bring the history of the text, as far as editions of note are concerned, down to those which are strictly of the present day.

Among the commentators on Shakespeare, who did not become his editors, the most noteworthy for the purposes of the present sketch are—Benjamin Heath, who published in 1765, “A Revisal of Shakespear's text; wherein the alterations introduced into it, by the more modern editors and critics, are particularly considered;” Thomas Tyrwhitt, the learned editor of Chaucer, whose “Observations and conjectures on some passages of Shakespeare” were published in 1766; Joseph Ritson, the eccentric literary antiquary, whose book of verbal criticisms on the text appeared in

1783; John Monck Mason, who published comments on Steevens' edition in 1785; E. H. Seymour, whose two volumes of "Remarks, critical, conjectural, and explanatory [including also the notes of Lord Chedworth], upon the plays of Shakspeare," appeared in 1805; Francis Douce, who issued his "Illustrations of Shakspeare and of Ancient Manners, &c." in 1809; Andrew Becket, who published two volumes, entitled "Shakspeare's himself again, or the language of the poet asserted; and Zachary Jackson, whose "Shakspeare's Genius Justified; being restorations and illustrations of seven hundred passages in Shakspeare," was given to the world in 1819.\*

Eminent among these for various learning, just discrimination, and a becoming deference to the author whose works he came to illustrate, is Mr. Douce. He is among the commentators what Malone is among the editors; save that his volumes exhibit a wider range of knowledge, and a more delicate and sympathetic apprehension of the peculiar beauties of Shakespeare than Malone possessed. The critical student of Shakespeare can place upon his shelves no book of comments more valuable than the two volumes of Francis Douce. He is, in fact, the only one of those who may be called the old commentators, whose works will bear reprinting. The original edition of his "Illustrations" having become very scarce, a reprint was issued in one volume, in 1839.

Heath, Tyrwhitt, Ritson, and Mason, all produced an appreciable and beneficial effect upon the text,—an effect which is permanent and undeniable. As was the case

\* This must not be considered as an intended catalogue of the commentators of past generations. Those only have been singled from the throng whose merits or demerits make them fit illustrations for the present historical sketch. Some of the ablest Shakesperian scholars of the present day will also be hereafter passed over with but an incidental mention, for similar reasons

with the labors of the large majority of the commentators and editors, the mass of their suggestions have been rejected by the good sense of their successors ; but they all treated their subject like scholars and men of sense, and each made a few conjectural emendations, which will always remain in the text. It is not because of an undervaluation of their abilities that we turn from them to Seymour, Becket, and Jackson.

Seymour was a pedagogue, not a critic. His book contains more systematic, narrow-minded carping at and quibbling with Shakespeare, and less sympathetic comprehension of his thought than can be found in all his other commentators, Becket and Jackson, perhaps, excepted. The knowledge that a verb should agree with its nominative case, and that ten syllables make a heroic line, forms the staple of the qualifications which he brought to his task. Speaking of the labors of his predecessors,—not very scrupulous or conservative, as the reader has already seen,—he says, complainingly :—

“ They have all been satisfied with delivering the text of each drama *as they found it*, with preference occasionally to the readings of different impressions ; and if the choice they made be deemed judicious, so much of their undertaking has been performed : but with regard to those anomalies in which the measure, construction, and sense have been vitiated, they appear to have been strangely negligent ; and sometimes strangely mistaken ; the want of meaning can never be excused ; *the disregard of syntax is no less reprehensible, and every poetic ear must be offended by metrical dissonance.*”—Vol. I., p. 2.

He practised what he preached. Thus, in the following lines from *Hamlet*—

“ ’Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father ;  
But you must know, your father lost a father ;  
That father *lost*, *lost* his, and the survivor bound,” &c.



he rejected, as interpolations, those words which are printed in *Italic letters*, and gave the passage thus :—

“Tis sweet and commendable in you, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father ;  
But you must know, your father lost a father ;  
That father his, and the survivor bound,” &c.

He removes the ‘from’ in all cases in which it is used with ‘whence,’ or ‘thence,’ because it is tautological ; thus endeavoring to conform the language of Shakespeare’s day to that of his own ; and he seeks, by mutilation, addition, and transposition, to make an unbroken series of perfect lines of ten syllables, from the beginning to the end of every play ; and in all these points his labors are rivalled by, and in some cases are identical with, the labors of Mr. Collier’s folio corrector.

It is difficult to speak with patience or decorum of Mr. Becket. His work is stupidity run mad ; and a just idea of it can only be obtained from extracts. Opening the first volume at random, we find the following :—

“‘*Hamlet*.—Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most excellent music.’

“‘Ventages and thumb,’ I would read thus : ‘Govern these ventages and the *umbo* with your fingers,’ &c. *Umbo*, (Lat.) a *knob* ; a *button*. The piece of brass at the end of a flute might very well be called a *button*.”—Vol. I., pp. 54, 55.

Again, from the same play,—*Hamlet*, in the grave with *Laertes*, is taunting him :—

“‘Woo’t weep ! woo’t fight ! woo’t fast ! woo’t tear thyself !  
Woo’t drink up Esil ! eat a crocodile !’ &c.

“This proposition of Hamlet is too extravagant, too ridiculous to remain in the text. By such a reading the Danish Prince

appears to be a very Dragon of Wantley for voraciousness." [Becket is serious.] \* \* "I regulate the passage thus :—

'Woo't weep, woo't drink, woo't eat? woo't fast? woo't fight?  
Woo't tear thyself?—Ape, Esel, Crocodile!'

\* \* "'Up' is misprinted for 'Ape,' 'Esel,' in old language, is 'Ass.'"—Vol. I., p. 67.

If that were all the commentator needed, why did he not read,

"Ape! Becket! Crocodile!"

The metre,—and the signification, would have been quite as well preserved, and the new arrangement would not have been a whit more impertinent. I will add only the following from *Macbeth*, by turning a few leaves. *Lady Macbeth* says :—

"Come thick night  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell!  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry, 'Hold, hold!'

"I correct the whole as follows :—

"Come thick night  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell!  
*That Heaven see not the wound my keen knife makes*  
*Deep through thy dark, nor blench at it to cry,*  
'Hold, hold!'"—Vol. I. p. 90.

It was necessary that we should look at Mr. Becket's work ; but have we not had enough of it ?

Zachary Jackson was a printer ; and as the greater portion of the corruptions of Shakespeare's works have crept into the text by the carelessness of compositors and proof-readers, he justly thought that a practical knowledge of his art would be of service in the conjectural correction of

the sadly misprinted folio. His knowledge of the composing case, and of the various accidents to which 'matter'—as standing type is called—is subjected, from the time it is set up until it goes to press, did enable him to make a few happy guesses, or rather deductions, as to the errors which had been committed and neglected by the first printers of Shakespeare. He had corrected a great deal of proof, and was thus able to conjecture, with occasional good fortune, what accident had produced the error in the book before him. But even in this he was by no means infallible ; and when, forgetting the "*ne sutor*," he ventured into the field of general comment and criticism, he made such absurd and atrocious changes in the text, that it is difficult to believe them the work of a mind above that of an idiot ; and yet he utters them with an owlish sapience that makes him the very *Bunsby* of commentators. *Ecce signum*. First, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act III. Sc. 1 :

" ' *Ursula*.———Signior Benedick,  
For shape, for bearing, argument, and valour  
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

" Thus the text makes Benedick *support* a greater weight than any porter in all Italy. For *argument*, I shall only say, it is the *very worst* recommendation to a lady's love, as it is not only productive of serious quarrels abroad, but also the strongest poison to domestic happiness.

" Our author wrote :—

' Signior Benedick,  
For shape, *forbearing* argument, and valour,  
Goes foremost in report through Italy.'

" Thus the recommendation is strong ; for though Benedick is the most valorous man throughout Italy, yet, he ever *forbears argument*, in order to avoid dissension : such endowments, I

think, could not fail of finding sufficient influence in the heart of Beatrice."—P. 35.

The next jewel of criticism and emendation is upon a passage in *Love's Labors Lost*, Act I. Sc. 1 :

"*Longaville.* A high hope for a low having : God grant us patience."

"The old copies read, a low *heaven* : the transcriber mistook the word, and wrote *heaven* instead of *haven*.

"The allusion is to a ship's head, decorated with the figure of Hope. Longaville compares the high flowing words of Armado to the awkward appearance of a ship, with an elevated figure of Hope, lying in a *low haven*. Longaville also plays on the word *hope*, which is used as a verb by Biron, but, by himself, as a substantive ; and Hope being symbolical of Patience, he concludes his speech with, *God grant us patience.*"—P. 51.

And we echo his supplication. Can any thing be more absurd, except the following reading in *As You Like It*, Act III. Sc. 2, of *goad*, for "good," and the justification of it ?

"*Rosalind.* Good my complexion ! dost thou think, though I am caparison'd like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition ?"

"The circumstance of the chain has already whispered to the heart of Rosalind, that Celia means Orlando ; but, pretending ignorance, she displays all that agitation of mind, prompted by curiosity, which the natural feelings of a female, who knows her own charms, testifies, on hearing that she is the theme of admiration ; and, therefore, with *most petitionary vehemence*, she desires to know the name of her woodland admirer : but Celia still sports with her agitation, and wishes to make her blush ; which playful maliciousness being perceived by Rosalind, she tells her, the only means to effect her purpose is to name her admirer : which will have such influence as to stimulate her blood, and cause a sensation in her heart, that must mantle her face with blushes ; therefore, she says :

'*Goad my complexion !*'

“Sound but the name! you *stimulate* my blood, and *rouse* it from my heart to strike upon my face; for, though *I am caparison'd like a man*, dost thou think *I have a doublet and hose in my disposition* that can veil my blushes, as they do my sex?”

“Thus, by the aid of the verb, the phrase gains corresponding uniformity; but which, in its present state, as Mr. Theobald justly observes, *cannot be reconciled to common sense*.

“This word is doubly applicable; for, if struck with a *goad* on the face, the part must become inflamed and red.”—P. 72.

As a specimen of critical fatuity, the following, upon a passage in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Act I. Sc. 3, might challenge a rival—outside of Shakesperian comment.

“‘*Clown*.———an we might have a good woman born, but every blazing star.’

“How can a *woman* be born? A female, when introduced into life, is an *infant* :—the reading is highly injudicious; and the correction seems to have been made without reflecting on the incongruity which it produced. The old copy reads :—‘*but o'er every blazing star*.’ In my opinion, from the word *on* being badly formed, the compositor mistook it for *ore*. I read :

——— ‘an we might have a good woman, but *on* every blazing star, or at an earthquake, &c.’—P. 84.

But Jackson could be a rival to himself, as this last selection from his pages, bristling with absurdities, will amply prove. It is on a speech in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act I. Sc. 1 :

“‘*Alexander*.       ——— Hector, whose patience  
Is, as a virtue, fix'd, to-day was mov'd.

“Patience being a virtue, the *fix'd virtue* has nothing to do with the passage. We should read :

——— ‘Hector, whose patience  
Is, as a *vulture* fix'd, to-day was mov'd.’

"Thus the patience of Hector is compared to the *vulture*, which never *moves* from the object of its insatiate gluttony, until it has entirely devoured it. Prometheus, according to fabulous history, was chained to Mount Caucasus, with a vulture preying constantly on his liver."—P. 259.

Can presumption and stupidity farther go? And yet this man made some of the very corrections in Mr. Collier's folio of 1632, for which that gentleman claims a higher authority than that of the first folio itself.

It is worthy of remark, considering the object of this sketch, that *Blackwood's Magazine*, some years ago, could speak favorably of a book which is filled with such rampant stupidity; that Mr. Knight, on the authority of "a most accomplished friend," bears witness, *Credat Judæus!* to "the *common sense* of the printer;" and that the generally judicious Mr. Hunter could say of Croft's "Annotations on plays of Shakespeare,"

"This pamphlet consists of twenty-four closely printed pages, and, I venture to say, contains more valuable remark than is to be found in the volumes of Zachary Jackson, and Andrew Becket, or even those of John, Lord Chedworth, and Henry James Pye."

A very safe assertion: but what had poor John Croft done, that Mr. Hunter should be so bitterly ironical? But perhaps Mr. Hunter was in earnest! It is possible; because, in Shakesperian criticism, all things are possible.

But though the text of Shakespeare suffered no permanent injury from such commentators as these, and though the *Variorum* and the *Chiswick* editions presented the works of the great dramatist more nearly as he produced them than they had ever before appeared in print, the increasing admiration of the world for those matchless writings, the influence of an humbler, more docile school

of criticism upon them, and the well-known fact that there were still many departures in those editions from the original folio, which, at least, might be needless, created a demand for a text conforming yet more strictly to the primitive standard ; and a little more than ten years ago, two editors stepped forward to supply this want. These were Mr. Knight and Mr. Collier. They each did much to effect that nearer approximation of the text to the "True Originall" which was so much needed. Both admitted conjectural emendations very sparingly, and only when they deemed them to be absolutely unavoidable ; and both made the first folio the exclusive authority for the text, which, strange to say, was then first done since Rowe's time ; but Mr. Collier admitted the "stolen and surreptitious" quartos to a higher authority than that awarded to them by Mr. Knight, who deferred only to the original folio. Mr. Collier had the great advantage of a long devotion to the study of old English literature, especially to that of Shakespeare's age ; but Mr. Knight brought to his task an intelligent veneration for his author, and a sympathetic apprehension of his thoughts, which, I venture to say, has never been surpassed—perhaps never equalled, by any of that gentleman's fellow-editors. There exist no critical essays more imbued with the pure spirit of Shakespeare than the Supplementary Notices which Mr. Knight appended to each play in his beautiful Pictorial Edition.

But both editors committed errors themselves, and allowed those of others to remain uncorrected. Mr. Collier admitted readings from the quartos, and the commentators, which are indefensible ; and Mr. Knight's almost superstitious veneration for the first folio, caused him to reproduce many passages from it, which are evidently corrupted by the gross typographical carelessness which so deforms that precious volume. This was undeniably shown

with excellent temper and spirit by the Rev. Alexander Dyce, the editor of Beaumont & Fletcher, Marlowe, Green, and Peele, &c., in his "Remarks on Mr. J. P. Collier's, and Mr. C. Knight's Editions of Shakspeare," which appeared in 1844; and which, when considered in connection with his other labors, points out Mr. Dyce as the editor from whom we may expect the purest text of Shakespeare which has yet been given to the world.

One other edition was produced, which should not be here passed by: that edited by the Hon. Gulian C. Verplanck, of New York. Mr. Verplanck's labors were more eclectic than speculative. Forming his text rather upon the labors of Mr. Collier, Mr. Knight, and Mr. Dyce, than upon original investigation and collation, and exercising a taste naturally fine, and disciplined by studies in a wide field of letters, he produced an edition of Shakespeare, which, with regard to text and comments, is, perhaps, preferable to any other which exists.

Such is the history, and such the present condition of the text of Shakespeare, which, upon the authority of Mr. Collier's newly discovered, old, anonymous, manuscript corrector, we are called upon to change in over one thousand important particulars.



**MR. COLLIER'S FOLIO OF 1632.**



## MR. COLLIER'S FOLIO OF 1632.

*Demens! qui nimbos et non imitabile fulmen,  
Ære et cornipedum pulsu simularat equorum.*

Vincil. *Æneid*, Lib. vi. 590.

IN the month of January, 1852, the attention of the literary world was excited by the announcement that a copy of the second folio impression of the plays of Shakespeare, filled with marginal corrections in manuscript, which appeared to be nearly as old as the volume, had fallen into the hands of Mr. J. P. Collier. When it was known that Mr. Collier declared that a great number of these manuscript corrections were of inestimable value, and that there was reason to believe that they had been made by some person who had access to better authorities than those possessed by the player-editors of the first folio, or by any of their successors, the interest in the matter became very great; and, amid some utterance of doubt and wonder, much satisfaction was universally expressed that so valuable a waif had fallen into the hands of one, the antecedents in whose editorial career gave warrant that he would put it to such careful and judicious use. Verbal criticism, even upon the works of Shakespeare, has generally not much interest for the mass of readers; and most especially would this seem to be true of the American people; but the republication in this country of Mr. Collier's "Notes

and Emendations to the Text of Shakespeare's Plays, from Early Manuscript Corrections, &c.," has been a successful undertaking ; and the subsequent issue, in numbers, of "The Plays of Shakespeare," with a text formed by the same editor, upon the same manuscript corrections, although not equally remunerative, has not failed to attract an undue share of public attention.

But, although it is not surprising that, under the circumstances, these publications should have been received with a certain favor among general readers, it is even less surprising that the thoughtful and devoted students of Shakespeare, those familiar with the language of his time, as well as his own peculiar inflections of thought and expression, and who regard his works with a reverence equal to their admiration,—it is less surprising that these should have been much disappointed at the appearance of the first volume, and justly troubled and offended upon the issue of the second. Let me not be misunderstood. The discovery of this corrected folio will prove to be of material service to the text of Shakespeare. Some of its emendations of that text, as it was given to the world by the printer of the first folio, are very plausible. But these are few indeed in comparison with those which are an outrage upon the great dramatist and his devotees, the resultants of united stolidity and presumption, and not to be received into the text on any pretence, or even worthy to be perpetuated in notes. It was bad enough for Mr. Collier to publish and support more than a thousand readings of this latter kind ; but for him to embody them boldly in the text, and publish a volume containing them, as "The Plays of Shakespeare," seems, indeed, as if he wished to furnish an example of the truth of the Shakesperian apothegm, that "bad begins, and worse remains behind."

Mr. Collier's folio either has authority or it has not.

If it have authority, we must submit implicitly to all its *dicta* ; if it have not, we must examine closely every correction, and judge it by its reasonableness and probability. Let us make the changes, if there be undeniable authority for them : and if they are exactly such as the text unquestionably demands, let us make them without authority.

The deference due to Mr. Collier's folio, is easily to be determined. Probably, most of my readers are already familiar with its recent history. At all events, it is only necessary to consider, at this time, the fact, that it was found four years ago, by Mr. Collier, in the shop of the late Mr. Rodd, Bookseller, of London. There are no means of discovering by whom the corrections were made ; and Mr. Collier has not been able to trace the possession of the volume beyond the latter part of the last century. The corrections appear in various colored inks, as Mr. Collier admits, and are, as we shall presently see, in the writing of various hands. There is, then, not even a traditional authority attaching to those corrections. They are made, not on a copy of the first folio, but on one of the second impression, which, as we have seen, corrects but few of the typographical errors of the first, and adds many to the remainder which it perpetuates. The corrections were certainly made long after the original actors of the plays had passed away, and some, if not all of the changes quite as surely not until after the Restoration, when the theatres had been closed for years, and the traditions of the stage had perished. Of this last fact they themselves furnish indisputable proof. There is no testimony whatever, then, to show that they are of any more value than if they were made yesterday by Mr. Smith.

But Mr. Collier, failing any testimony as to the authority of his folio, bases its claim to deference on the character of its emendations, and the ancient handwriting in which those

emendations are made. Let us examine this claim. Suppose this case. In the first act of *Macbeth* occurs the following well-known passage, which, though pages of explanatory and emendatory comment have been written upon it, needs no exegesis, and has been made confusing only by the labors of the note-mongers. Its vivid but disjointed imagery, its profound but broken reflections, are apprehended at once by the sympathetic reader of Shakespeare ;—who, be it remembered, completely apprehends much in his author, of which he cannot give a detailed analysis :

“ If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
 It were done quickly : If the assassination  
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,  
 With his surcease, success ; that but this blow  
 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,—  
 We'd jump the life to come—But, in these cases,  
 We still have judgment here ; that we but teach  
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
 To plague the inventor. This even handed justice  
 Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice  
 To our own lips. He's here in double trust :  
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,—  
 Strong both against the deed ; then, as his host,  
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,  
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan  
 Hath borne his faculties so meek ; hath been  
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against  
 The deep damnation of his taking off :  
 And pity like a naked new-born babe,  
 Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd  
 Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
 That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur  
 To prick the sides of my intent ; but only  
 Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,  
 And falls on the other—How now ! what news ! ”

Suppose Mr. Collier's corrected folio had given this passage as follows ;—the variations from the present received reading being printed in italic letter :

"If it were *done*!—'*Twere well it were done quickly.*  
*But then when 'tis done!*—If the assassinator  
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
 With *its success, surcease* : that but this blow  
 Might be the be-all and the end-all here:  
 But here—upon this bank, and *school'd* of time,  
 We'd jump the life to come.—But, in these cases  
 We still have judgment here: that we but teach  
 Bloody *inductions*, which being taught return  
 To plague the inventor. \* \* \* \*

[Read the intervening lines without alteration.]

And *new-born pity, naked like a babe*  
*Or Heaven's cherubin hoist,*  
 Upon the *coursers of the sightless air,*  
 Shall blow the horrid deed, *with strident blast*  
 That *everichene intiers* shall drown the wind.  
 I have no spur  
 To prick the sides of my *intenant*, but only  
 Vaulting ambition, which *falls on itself,*  
*And overleaps* the other."

If for such an emendation Mr. Collier had claimed "a higher authority" than that used by the editors of the first folio, what a shout of scorn and derision would have gone up from the whole world of letters! And yet this preposterous reading of the passage is seriously proposed, and sustained through four octavo pages, by a commentator, Becket, who also proposes some of the very corrections found in Mr. Collier's folio of 1632. Had this reading of the passage in *Macbeth* been found in that folio, the weight of no name, the plausibility of no reasoning could have persuaded two sane men that the MS. corrections were of the least authority. The admissibility, then, of those corrections, in the utter absence of any evidence which gives

them even traditional authority, depends entirely upon their appositeness. Their authority is to be derived solely from their intrinsic worth. The passage corrected must, in the first place, unquestionably need correction as it stands in the original folio ; and, in the next, the correction proposed must be such as to recommend itself implicitly to those who are most familiar with the text of the poet and the literature of his time. This is the only safe rule to adopt with regard to any arbitrary emendations of Shakespeare's text ;—a rule which Malone thus laid down in one of his controversies with Steevens, upon a passage in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

“ By arbitrary emendations, I mean conjectures made at the will and pleasure of the conjecturer, and without any authority. Such are Rowe's, Pope's, Theobald's, Hanmer's, &c., and my assertion is, that all emendations not authorized by authentic copies, printed or manuscript, stand on the same footing, and are to be judged of by their reasonableness or probability ; and therefore, if Sir Thomas Hanmer or Dr. Warburton, had proposed an hundred false conjectural emendations, and two evidently just, *I should have admitted these two, and rejected all the rest.*” —Boswell's Malone, Vol. IV., p. 129.

But this folio of Mr. Collier's is not only without the slightest supporting evidence to give it authority, *ex cathedra*, but contains within itself the most conclusive proof that it has not the shadow of a claim to any such authority. In examining it, we shall find that the corrector has showed a great, though by no means singular incapacity to appreciate the poetry, the wit, and the dramatic propriety of Shakespeare's writing : that some of the most important of his corrections were made with a disregard of the context, and are at variance with it : that a long time had passed between the publication of the volume and the making of the corrections : that the maker of them con-



formed to the taste and usages of a period at least half a century subsequent to the date of the production of the Plays: that, according to Mr. Collier's own showing, he continually made corrections merely because he did not understand the text as he found it: that the corrector himself blundered, and corrected his own corrections, which could not have been the case if they had been made from "a higher authority:" and that some of those emendations, the peculiar character of which has been regarded by many as convincing proof that they could not have been conjectural, but must have been made in conformity with some authority, have, on the contrary, been suggested as the fruit of mere conjecture or deduction by other recent correctors, some of whom are among the most wrong-headed and ignorant of Shakespeare's many wrongheaded and ignorant commentators.

And first, as to evident miscomprehension of Shakespeare's meaning. In *As You Like it*, Act III., Sc. 4, is this passage:

"*Orlando*. Who could be out being before his beloved mistress!

*Rosalind*. Marry, that should you, if I were your mistress, or I should think my honesty ranker than my wit."

It would seem impossible to misunderstand this; and yet the MS. corrector proposes that *Rosalind* should say,

"Marry, that should you, if I were your mistress, or I should *thank* my honesty *rather* than my wit:"

—a change which makes absurd nonsense of the passage; for, in the case supposed by *Rosalind*, she would have no honesty to thank.

In the first scene of *All's Well that Ends Well*, poor *Helena*, giving language to her hope that the distance between her and *Count Bertram* might prove no obstacle to her happiness, says,

"The mightiest space in fortune, nature brings  
To join like likes, and kiss like native things."

That is,—obviously and pertinently,—that the gifts of nature, in which she supposed herself not wanting, are sometimes able to overcome the greatest differences in fortune. But Mr. Collier's folio reads,

"The mightiest space in *nature, fortune* brings  
To join like likes," &c. ;

thus making *Helena* say exactly the reverse of what Shakespeare made her say, and of what she should say. As the alteration is also entirely at variance with the rest of the speech, this blunder must also be regarded as one of those which show misunderstanding or disregard of the context.

In the chorus of the third Act of *Henry V.*, are the following lines :—

"Behold the threaten sails,  
Borne with th' invisible and creeping wind,  
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrow'd sea ;"

the second of which, the corrector would make,

"*Blown* with th' invisible and creeping wind,"

thus substituting a prosaic statement of a material fact for a poetical and picturesque description of it.

In the first scene of Act IV. of the same play, *Henry* speaks of

"The wretched slave,  
Who, with a body fill'd and vacant mind,  
Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread."

This ruthless man would take the very life of the last line, by reading it,

"Gets him to bed cramm'd with *distasteful* bread."

Unhappy corrector ! Because you cannot see that in those felicitous words, "distressful bread," are pictured the hard lot of the poor slave, whose homely food, whose very sustenance, is bought by suffering,—because you cannot see this, would you in revenge take that sweet "distressful" morsel out of our mouths ? and will John Payne Collier, Esq., F. S. A., abet you in your vile design ?

In *Troilus and Cressida*, Act IV., Sc. 4, *Troilus* says,

"And sometimes we are devils to ourselves,  
When we will tempt the frailty of our powers,  
Presuming on their changeful potency."

The last line means, obviously,—presuming on their potency or stability, which proves to be changeful : but the corrector would make it needlessly and prosaically,

"Presuming on their *chainful* potency."

*Romeo* says to *Juliet* in that matchless scene of parting which is to be followed by no greeting,

"I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye,  
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow."

The literal gentleman dissents. He cannot see the beauty of a reflex from the pale brow of Diana ; but must drag the poetry down so far as to allude to the shape of the crescent moon, and read *bow* for "brow." Why was he not thorough and consistent enough to make a corresponding change in the first line, take out the poetical thought of "the morning's eye," and read,

"I'll say yon gray is not the morning *sky*,  
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's *bow*?"

Mr. Collier calls it "a very acceptable alteration," when, in *Lady Macbeth's* invocation :

"Come thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry, 'Hold! hold!'"

this MS. corrector would read,

"Nor heaven peep through the *blankness* of the dark."

To say nothing of the difficulty of peeping through blankness, what obtuseness must that be which, after night has been invoked to assume a "*pall*" of the "dunnest smoke of hell," cannot see the eminent fitness of the phrase, "the *blanket* of the dark"? It is to be expected that such a person would, in the previous scene, change the poetical word,

"The swiftest *wing* of recompense is slow,"

for the prosaic

"The swiftest *wind* of recompense is slow;"

and in the first scene of Act II. of *Julius Cæsar*, substitute for,

"the honey-heavy dew of slumber,"  
"the heavy *honey-dew* of slumber:"

because, forsooth, there is "a well-known glutinous deposit" upon the leaves of trees, "which may be called honey-dew."

We might disregard, if not pardon, this anonymous and irresponsible corrector for the following attempt at mutilation; but what must be thought of Mr. Collier, who says that "the emendation proposed should probably be the text." In *Hamlet's* second soliloquy, he says,

"For it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter."

For the last line, it is proposed to read,

"To make *transgression* bitter."

But wonder at the hopeless obtuseness which could propose such a change, is lost in amazement at the reason which Mr. Collier gives for receiving it; which is, that "it was not oppression, but crime that was to be *punished* by" *Hamlet*. When such a veteran critic as Mr. Collier cannot see that *Hamlet* thought himself "a peasant slave," "a dull and muddy mettled rascal," "a coward," and "pigeon-livered," because he lacked the gall which would make oppression bitter to *himself*—when Mr. Collier does not see this, what can we hope from the learning and devotion of any Shakesperian critic?

In *Cymbeline*, Mr. Collier's corrector proposes a change of ludicrous tameness. *Imogen*, impatient to meet *Posthumus*, exclaims, "O for a horse with wings!" and, when *Pisanio* tells her that twenty miles a day is as much as she can accomplish, says,

"I have heard of riding wagers,  
Where horses have been nimbler than the sands  
That run i' the clock's behalf."

The MS. corrector makes *Imogen* speak of horses

"nimbler than the sands  
That run i' the clock's, *by half*."!

Mr. Collier remarks that *Imogen* adds, "'But this is foolery,' in reference, perhaps, to her own simile." Such might well have been the case were her simile that which Mr. Collier's folio would put into her mouth; but, as Shakespeare wrote the passage, she calls it "foolery" to stand talking of the speed of horses, when they should be using them. She says,

"But this is foolery,—  
Go bid my woman feign a sickness; say  
She'll home to her father: and provide me, presently,  
A riding suit," &c.

The most remarkable change made in Mr. Collier's folio, occurs in this play, in the fourth scene of Act III. *Imogen*, wounded to the quick at her husband's suspicion of her chastity, supposes that he has been seduced away from her by some Italian courtesan, and exclaims,

"Some jay of Italy,  
Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him."

The figure in the second line is so very bold,—violent perhaps, that it is not apprehended at once by all readers; and this seems to have been the case with Mr. Collier's corrector, who changes the passage to,

"Some jay of Italy  
*Who smothers her with painting,*" &c.

The similarity of sound between the two phrases, and the simple statement of fact contained in the latter, have caused this emendation to be received with great favor by some readers of Shakespeare, and to be regarded by them as a strong evidence of the value of the volume in which it occurs. But it should be remarked that a change of the passage *is not absolutely necessary*,—that the proposed change, like all those in this folio, is from poetry to prose;—and that the ground on which the emendation is thought desirable is not tenable, as far as the text of Shakespeare is concerned. For, the passage has an unmistakable meaning as it stands; and who has a right to substitute, for what it is, his idea of what it should be?—the change puts a bald statement of a physical fact in the place of a suggestive, though very strong, figure of speech:—and the opinion of Mr. Collier that "*Imogen would not study me-*



taphors at such a moment," is not sustained by the context, and his assertion that "it is an axiom that genuine passion avoids figures of speech" is at variance with Shakespeare's portraiture of passion; which, whether truthful or not, are all with which we have at present to deal.

*Imogen*, in *this very speech*, uses another very strong metaphor, one which has been thought to require learned notes to explain it. She says,

"Some jay of Italy,  
Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him;  
Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;  
And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,  
*I must be ripp'd:—to pieces with me!*"

And this same *Imogen* when she wakes and finds at her side (as she supposes) her idolized lord beheaded by *Pisano*, cries out,

"Damn'd *Pisano*  
Hath with his forged letters,—damn'd *Pisano*,—  
*From this most bravest vessel of the world*  
*Struck the main top!*"

As to similes in Shakespeare's pictures of passion, hear the passion of others than *Imogen*: hear *Othello*:—

"*Othello*. O, blood, Iago, blood!  
*Iago*. Patience, I say; your mind, perhaps, may change.  
*Othello*. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontick sea,  
Whose icy current and compulsive course  
Ne'er knows retiring ebb, but keeps due on  
To the Propontick and the Hellespont;  
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,  
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,  
Till that a capable and wide revenge  
Swallow them up."

Hear *Romeo*, when he has just killed *Paris*, and finds *Juliet* dead in the tomb:—

"Ah! dear Juliet,  
Why art thou yet so fair! I will believe  
That unsubstantial death is amorous;  
And that the lean, abhorred monster keeps  
Thee in the dark here, to be his paramour."

Hear the towering passion of *Coriolanus*, when, a few moments before he is slain by the infuriated rabble, some one calls him a "boy of tears :"—

"Boy! False hound!  
If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there, \\  
That like an eagle in a dove-cote I  
Flutter'd your Voices in Corioli."

Hear *Constance*, wailing for her lost *Arthur* :—

"Grief fills the room up of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;  
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form," &c

Hear *Claudio*, with mingled grief and indignation, upbraiding *Hero* :—

"Thou pure impiety and impious purity!  
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love;  
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,  
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm," &c.

Hear *Hotspur*, maddened by King *Henry* :—

"By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,  
To pluck bright honour from the pale fac'd moon;  
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,  
Where fathom line could never touch the ground,  
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks," &c.

Well may *Worcester* say of him,

"He apprehends a *world of figures* here,  
But not the form of what he should attend."





Could words be made more figurative than they are in all of these expressions of excited feeling, which are not a tithe of those which Shakespeare's dramas would afford, of a like kind? *Claudio's* "on my eyelids shall conjecture hang," is one of the strongest, as well as one of the most beautiful figures in the whole range of poetry. It has a bolder beauty than those two lovely lines of which it reminds us, in Spenser's description of *Una* :

"Upon her eyelids many graces sat,  
Under the shadow of her even brow."

It is not true, I venture to assert, that passion avoids figures of speech. Its utterance is always direct and forcible; but sometimes the most direct and forcible medium of expression is to be found in a metaphor. So, at least, thought Shakespeare; which is all that, in this case, needs to be established.

With regard to the confusion of sounds which is supposed to account for the alleged error in the original line, Mr. Collier himself admits it "to be possible that the old corrector, not understanding the expression, 'Whose mother was her painting,' might mistake it for '*Who smothers her with painting*!'" This possibility is made certainty by a passage in *Hamlet*, which the able opponent of the new reading, Mr. Halliwell, who has made it the subject of a special pamphlet, has not noticed. In the second scene of Act I., *Hamlet's* mother asks him why a father's death seems so particular to him. He replies,

"Seems, madam! Nay, it is: I know not seem  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black," &c.

Now, it is remarkable that in the fifth quarto impression of this play, published in 1611, these lines are printed thus :

"Seemes, maddam, nay it is, I know not seemes,  
 'Tis not alone my incky cloake *could smother*," &c.

Here is proof positive that "good mother" not only could be, but was, misunderstood, *could smother*; a mistake, in its principal feature, identical with that made by the corrector of Mr. Collier's folio, and which suggests another mode of accounting for the manuscript correction. It is evident that whoever made the emendations in that volume, studied the quartos thoroughly; indeed, Mr. Collier frequently claims that such was the case. Now, it is not at all improbable that the corrector, finding this mistake of *could smother*, in the quarto, for "good mother" in the folio, took from it the hint for the change of "whose mother," into *who smothers*; and thus was enabled to make a sense for a passage which had before been to him meaningless. It is somewhat strange that this correlative error, almost conclusive in itself, has not occurred to either of Mr. Collier's learned opponents.\* Under all these circumstances, it is impossible to receive the new reading, plausible as it seems at first.

These are but a very few indeed of the instances in which the corrector of the folio of 1632 has shown his inability to apprehend the poetical thoughts of the author whose works he undertook to amend. Passages which prove his incapacity in other respects, and which establish the late date of his labors, and the remaining points which go to show the entire inadmissibility of the claims which Mr. Collier sets up for him, might be quoted to an extent which would fill the remainder of this volume; but a con-

\* As I know of no original impression of either of the quarto copies of this play in America, I am obliged to content myself with Steevens's reprint, which is from the edition of 1611. I therefore cannot say whether this strange and important error appeared in the editions of 1604, 1605, and 1609.



sideration for the patience of my readers must limit my selections. One or two instances which clearly establish a point are as conclusive upon the *authority* of his corrections as a hundred.

He cannot appreciate Shakespeare's humor. For instance, after the lamentation of *Bottom* (as *Pyramus*) over the death of *Thisbe*, *Theseus* says,

"This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad ;"

the humor of which consists in coupling the ridiculous fustian of the clown's assumed passion, with an event which would, in itself, make a man look sad. The corrector extinguishes the fun at once, by reading,

"This passion on the death of a dear friend," &c.

And, incomprehensible as it is, Mr. Collier sustains him by saying, that the observation of *Theseus* "has particular reference to the 'passion' of *Pyramus* on the fate of *Thisbe* !"

In *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Beatrice*, being sent to call *Benedick*, he asks her if she takes pleasure in the office. She replies,

"Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choke a daw withal."

This, our precise and literal corrector ruins, by inserting 'not,' and reading :

"Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point and *not* choke a daw withal."

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act I., Sc. 3, *Charmian* advising *Cleopatra* how to keep the love of *Antony*, says :—

"In each thing give him way, cross him in nothing."

To which *Cleopatra* replies :

"Thou teachest like a fool : the way to lose him."

Meaning, of course, "You are a fool, girl; that is the way to lose him;" but this the corrector changes to,

"Thou teachest, like a fool, the way to lose him;"

a reading which makes, in substance, the same assertion as the original, but which destroys all the delicate and characteristic humor of the gay queen's reply.

So when, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act IV., Sc. 5, poor *Simple*, mistaking 'conceal' for 'reveal,' says, in reply to *Falstaff*, "I may not conceal them, Sir," and the *Host*, after his waggish fashion, bewilders yet more the serving man's feeble brain, by turning his own blunder upon him, and saying, "Conceal [i. e. reveal] them, or thou diest," Mr. Collier's folio expurgates all the fun from the passage by retaining an obvious typographical error of the original, and making *Falstaff* and the *Host* use "conceal" in its legitimate and sober sense.\*

The corrector's obtuseness as to dramatic propriety is equally obvious with his incapacity to appreciate poetry and humor. In Act IV., Sc. 4, of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Sir Hugh Evans*, talking of *Falstaff*, with *Page* and *Ford* and their wives, remarks of the plot to entice the knight to another meeting,

"You say he has been thrown into the rivers, and has been grievously peaten, as an old 'oman: methinks there should be terrors in him that he should not come:" &c.

The old corrector makes the parson say, "You see he has been thrown," &c., and Mr. Collier sustains the change, by the remark that "the other persons in the scene had said nothing of the kind." But the corrector and his backer were obviously blind to the fact that the scene opens with the

\* This has also been pointed out by Mr. Singer in his "Text of Shakespeare Vindicated," &c.

entry of the whole party *in the midst of a conversation* upon the subject of *Ford's* jealousy and *Falstaff's* mis-haps ; as is plain from the speeches of *Evans* and *Page*, when the scene opens.

"*Evans*.—'Tis one of the pest discretions of a 'oman as I ever did look upon.

'*Page*.—And did he send you both these letters at an instant !"

But no "'oman" or "letters" have been mentioned on the stage. Yet evidently *Mrs. Ford* is the "'oman," and the letters are those of *Falstaff* to *Mrs. Ford* and *Mrs. Page*, which had been the subjects of a conversation begun before the entrance of the party. Shakespeare was not such a bungler at his art as to make his characters always stalk upon the stage, and formally commence their conference. *Sir Hugh's* "You say" refers to something said before the scene opened. As an examination of the first part of the scene would have prevented this error, it has a place also among those blunders which result from a neglect of the context. The corrected text of this folio and the stage directions furnish many instances of similar carelessness and incapacity; but as my present object is not to attack the emendations in detail, but to establish the corrector's want of authority, and also of ability, by showing that in certain instances his work is essentially inconsistent with Shakespeare's obvious intention, and as this one case fully proves the point for which it is quoted, I pass on to the next.

The entire absence of a higher authority for the corrections, as well as the narrowness of view of the corrector,—or, rather, of one of the correctors, for there were evidently more than one,—is shown by his continual neglect of the context; his insight appearing to have been limited to the sentence, or the very line which he corrected. Thus, in the *Tempest*, Act. I. Sc. 2, *Prospero* speaks of,

"one  
 Who having, unto truth, by telling of it,  
 Made such a sinner of his memory  
 To credit his own lie."

The construction of which plainly is, 'one who having made such a sinner of his memory unto truth, to credit his own lie by telling of it.' But Mr. Collier's corrector saw only the apparent contradiction in the second line, and, seeking to remedy that, changed "unto truth" to 'to untruth;' reading,

"Who having to *untruth*, by telling of it," &c.

not seeing the absurdity of asserting that a man made a sinner of his memory to *untruth*, by telling a *lie*.

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act V. Sc. 2, the *Princess*, learning from *Boyet* that visitors are approaching to lay open siege to their hearts, exclaims,

"Saint Dennis to Saint Cupid! What are they  
 That charge their breath against us? Say, scout, say."

Mr. Collier assures us "that 'to charge their breath' is nonsense," and the MS. corrector of his folio changes the phrase to "that charge *the breach* against us." And this, in the face of the very announcement to which the *Princess* replies, and in which *Boyet* says, that

"Love doth approach disguis'd  
 Armed in *arguments*: you'll be surpris'd.  
 Muster your *wits*," &c.

What would have been the confusion of the old corrector, if the text had been "What are they that *tilt their tongues* against us?" instead of "charge their breath," which it might well have been. In that case he certainly would have changed it to "what are they that tilt *with tongs* against us?"—which is a fair type of the literal sort of emendation with which Mr. Collier's folio furnishes us.

Mr. Collier says that "there is undeniable error in the subsequent lines at the end of *Scrope's* speech in *Henry IV.*, Part 2, Act IV. Sc. 1.

"So that this land, like an offensive wife  
That hath enrag'd him on to offer strokes,  
As he is striking, holds his infant up,  
And hangs resolv'd correction in the arm  
That was uprear'd to execution."

"To whom," asks Mr. Collier, "does 'him' refer? Indisputably to the husband," and he sustains his folio in reading the second line,

"That hath enrag'd *her man* to offer strokes."

But "him" refers to *King Henry*; as is evident from the context, in which *Scrope* distinctly points out the king's perplexity, which his simile of the "offensive wife" but illustrates :

"For full well he knows,  
He cannot so precisely weed this land,  
As his misdoubts present occasion :  
His foes are so enrooted with his friends,  
That, plucking to unfix an enemy,  
He doth unfasten so, and shake a friend,  
So that this land, like an offensive wife,  
That hath enrag'd him on to offer strokes,  
As he is striking, holds his infant up," &c.

In Act III. Scene 5, of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Juliet* having been informed by *Lady Capulet* of the projected marriage with *Paris*, refuses the match indignantly. The conclusion of her speech, and her mother's reply, are as follows :

"I will not marry yet; and when I do, I swear  
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,  
Rather than Paris :—These are news indeed !  
*Lady C.* Here comes your father; tell him so yourself," &c.

This passage, Mr. Collier's folio changes, by giving *Juliet's* last exclamation to her mother, and omitting "I swear!" Thus :

"I will not marry yet; and when I do,  
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,  
Rather than Paris.  
*Lady C.*                      These are news indeed!  
Here comes your father; tell him so yourself, &c."

The new arrangement is called "judicious" by Mr. Collier, who also justifies the omission of "I swear!" on the ground that the oath is "hardly consistent with the delicacy of her [*Juliet's*] character, and certainly destructive to the measure." But both the MS. corrector and Mr. Collier forget that *Lady Capulet* leads to the announcement of the projected marriage by promising *Juliet* pleasant news, about which the poor ignorant girl at once expresses curiosity. She has just affected such a hatred of *Romeo* as to profess to be willing to mix a poison for him, if some man could be found to give it to him: her mother replies :

"Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.  
But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.  
*Jul.* All joy comes well in such a needy time;  
What are they, I beseech your ladyship?"

*Lady Capulet*, in reply, tells her of the negotiated marriage; at which she at once expresses her disgust and surprise, and exclaims, as well she may, "These are news indeed!" She has learned her mother's "joyful tidings," as we say, 'with a vengeance.' The exclamation palpably belongs to her; and there is not the slightest pretext for giving it to her mother. As to "I swear" being inconsistent with the delicacy of *Juliet's* character, Mr. Collier seems to have forgotten, that like most young ladies of her



country and her time, she had a pretty free tongue of her own : that she calls her nurse "a devil," and *Romeo*, in her contending emotions on the death of *Tybalt*, "a damned saint," and her nurse again, an "ancient damnation," simply because that easy-going old person advises her to marry the *County Paris*. Compared with these expressions, *Juliet's* "I swear," which was but a solemn asseveration, natural under the circumstances, is venial; especially when we consider how freely ladies talked in Shakespeare's day. Here, then, in a single passage we find displayed a neglect of the context, a want of appreciation of character as Shakespeare has portrayed it, and an ignorance or disregard of the manners of his time.

Much delight has been expressed by some persons, intelligent people, too, at the substitution of *boast* for "beast" in a speech of *Lady Macbeth's*. She says, as *Macbeth* expresses a fear to murder *Duncan*,

"What beast was't, then,  
That made you break this enterprise to me?"

The MS. corrector makes this,

"What *boast* was't, then,  
That made you break this enterprise to me?"

altogether forgetting that *Macbeth* had but just said,

"I dare do all that may become a *man*.  
Who dares do more, *is none*,"

and that *Lady Macbeth*, at once catching at his phrase, instantly replies, "what *beast* was't, then," [since it was unworthy of a *man*] "that made you break this enterprise to me?"—and, besides, *Macbeth* had made no *boast*.

Several other glaring instances, establishing the fact that the corrections were made in entire ignorance or disregard

of the context, are indicated on my memoranda ; but these are sufficient ; and we must pass on to consider a specimen or two of the many changes which show that a long time had elapsed between the writing of the plays, and the MS. alteration of the text. The first I shall notice is a MS. stage direction in Act. IV. Sc. 3, where *Biron* has read his sonnet, and, seeing the king approaching with a paper, wishes to hide himself. Mr. Collier says :—

“ When at this juncture, *Biron* conceals himself, the printed stage direction is only *He stands aside*, but that is obliterated, and *He gets him in a tree*, is put in its place in manuscript. When, too, *Biron* interposes some remarks to himself, it is added that he is *in the tree*,” &c.

It is strange that the historian of the English Stage did not see that these stage directions—for there are several such—are fatal to the pretence of his folio to “ authority.” Why was the printed direction only “ *He stands aside*,” in the second folio as well as in the first ? Because, when the play was written and printed, painted scenery, and above all, ‘ practicable ’ trees did not exist upon our stage. When they represented the field of Agincourt, as in the Chorus to the fourth Act of *Henry V.*, Shakespeare himself tells us they did,

“ With three or four most vile and ragged foils  
Right ill dispos'd in brawl ridiculous,”

it was useless to direct a man to mount a tree. Scenery of that sort was not introduced until after the Restoration ; and the direction “ *in the tree*,” appended to *Biron's* remark to himself, shows that it was actually in use on the stage when these MS. alterations were made.†

\* For instance, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act II. Scene 3, where the stage direction in Mr. Collier's folio for *Benedick*, is, “ *Retires behind the trees*.”

† I cannot if I would, reproduce all my authorities for minor and well

In the second scene of the *Induction* to the *Taming of the Shrew*, *Sly*, insisting upon his tinkership, says,

“Ask Marian Hacket, the fat alewife of Wincot, if she know me not: and if she say I am not fourteen pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lyingest knave in Christendom.”

This passage has presented a difficulty to all the English editors of Shakespeare, which could never have occurred even to an American boy. The trouble is in the expression “sheer ale.” Hear Mr. Collier:

“Malone did not know what to make of ‘sheer ale,’ but supposed that it meant *shearing* or reaping ale, for so reaping is called in Warwickshire. What does it mean? It is spelt *sheere* in the old copies, and that word begins one line, *Warwick* having undoubtedly dropt out at the end of the preceding line. The corrector of the folio 1632, inserted the missing word in manuscript, and made the last part of the sentence run—

‘If she say I am not fourteen pence on the score for *Warwickshire* ale, score me up for the lyingest knave in Christendom.’

“Wincot, where Marian Hacket lived, is some miles from Stratford-upon-Avon. It was formerly not at all unusual to spell ‘shire’ *sheere*; and *Sly*’s ‘sheer ale’ thus turns out to have been *Warwickshire* ale, which Shakespeare celebrated, and of which he had doubtless often partaken at Mrs. Hacket’s.”

To this, add Mr. Singer’s perplexity. He says:

“‘*Sheer* ale’ is altered to ‘*Warwickshire* ale,’ an unwarrantable license, and a very improbable name to have been given to *Sly*’s liquor. *Sheer* ale was most likely, ale which the Tinker had drunk at his own charge on *Sheer* Tuesday, a day of great comfort to the poor from the doles or distribution of clothes,

established points. The reader who desires to examine the facts and documents which establish the time of the introduction of scenery upon the English Stage, will find them fully set forth in Malone’s *History of the English Stage*,—in the *Variorum Shakespeare*, Vol. iii., p. 79 to p. 109.

meat, and drink, made to them by the rich on that day. But should this conjecture be unfounded, we may perhaps satisfy ourselves that *Sheer* ale was the name of a pure and potent liquor, as we have *stark beer* for stout and strong beer, in Beaumont and Fletcher.'

This, and many similar difficulties of the commentators, some of which are noticed in this volume, are only amusing to Americans, for whom the perplexities do not exist, because of the survival of good old English expressions and customs with us, which seem to have died out in the mother country. *Sly's* "sheer ale," is simply 'ale, alone.' He, toper that he is, is on goodwife *Hacket's* score fourteen pence for *nothing else but ale*. In the northern part of the United States this use of the word has been common, from time immemorial. We say sheer ale, or sheer brandy, or sheer nonsense, or sheer any thing. We would say that in *Falstaff's* famous tavern bill, his bread was but a halfpenny, while there were five shillings and eightpence for sheer sack. We use it in this way, and have so used it beyond the memory of the oldest living men ; just as we say sheer impudence, or sheer stupidity—a use of the word which can hardly have disappeared in England. The term implies *exclusiveness, with, generally, a taint of reproach and ridicule*. Thus, we would say that one man committed an act out of *sheer* selfishness, but that another's motive was *pure* benevolence.

Thus much for the benefit of English readers ; but the pertinence of these remarks just here, is that the inability of the MS. corrector to understand "sheer ale," shows that he must have read Shakespeare and made the corrections long after the printing of the second folio—1632. For our English ancestors, who made the original settlements in the northern part of the United States, and who brought this use of the word with them, came over between 1620 and

1640 ; and the inability of a man who would elaborately correct Shakespeare's text, to understand *Sly's* "sheer ale," seems certainly to prove that his labors bear a date much posterior to the latter year. It should be remembered, too, that the folio of 1632, itself, presents variations from the folio of 1623, made to adapt the text to a change of phrase which had taken place during the first thirty years of the seventeenth century, and that this use of "sheer" had, therefore, at the date of the second folio, not passed away in England. Mr. Collier hardly imagined that the survival in America of an old English idiom would utterly extinguish his complacently uttered conclusion, that "this emendation, like many others, must have been obtained from some better manuscript than that in the hands of the old printer," and bring down the date of the corrections in his folio twenty-five years at least ; that is, to the time of the Restoration.\*

In *Henry VIII.*, the *King*, addressing *Woolsey*, says,

" You have scarce time  
To steal from spiritual leisure a brief span,  
To keep your earthly audit."

The second line of this is altered by the corrector to,—

\* When these remarks were written, I had read only the comments of Malone, and Messrs. Collier and Singer upon the passage ; and having never met with 'sheer' in a modern English work, and not having had the advantage of a residence in England, I naturally, and I submit, very justly, concluded that when such accomplished English scholars as those whom I have named were completely befogged as to the very obvious meaning of the word in question, it was sufficiently proved that the word was not in use in England. But as these sheets are going through the press, I have received a set of *Notes and Queries* for the present year ; and I find, from a very able communication, signed Cecil Harbottle (No. 184, p. 451), that 'sheer nonsense,' 'sheer buffoonery,' and 'sheer malice,' &c., are phrases of common use in England, as, indeed, I supposed they must be ; and Mr. C. H., in words almost identical with mine, says that "*Sly* means to say that he was fourteen pence on the score for ale alone." This makes it so much the worse for the M.S. corrector and the commentators.

"To steal from spiritual *labour* a brief span,"

because, as Mr. Collier says, "if Woolsey enjoyed so much 'spiritual leisure,' it would seem as if he might have time also for his earthly audit." But the change cannot be received, as it proceeded from ignorance of an old use of the word "leisure." It was used to signify, not only relaxation from labor, but time devoted to any occupation: as is evident from the following passage, which I accidentally met with since the publication of Mr. Collier's book, in reading Sir Thomas Chaloner's translation of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, published in 1549. *Folly* speaks of the difference between those authors who are studious and careful, and those who devote their pens to her.

"Besides the hurte thei susteyn in theyr bodies, decay of beautie, marryng of their eyesight, or also blindness, together with pouertie, enuie, forbearing of pleasures, untimely age, hasted death, and such like disadvantages, which natheless these wise men sticke not at, so they maye have theyr writings allowed at one or two of these blerciéd bokewormes handes. But my Scribes on the other side, have not a little more commoditie and pleasure of their folie. Whereas, *taking no greate leysure in penninge of theyr mattier*, naie, rather whatsoever toy lighteth in theyr head, or falleth in their thought, be it but theyr dreame, they do put the same straight in writing," &c.—*The Praise of Folie*. 4to., 1549. Sig. L ii.

Here "leisure" is evidently used, but a generation before Shakespeare, to mean the time devoted to labor. It is the same use of the word which is made in a passage in Chaucer's *Tale of Meliboeus*, quoted by Richardson in his Dictionary.

"Wherefore we axen *leiser* and space to have deliberation in this case to deem."

Here the opportunity, or leisure, asked, is not for relaxa-

tion, but for the labor of deeming, *i. e.*, judging a case. It is plain that we must retain the original text. "Spiritual leisure" is the time devoted to spiritual affairs.

The alterations which show that, before they were made, tastes and usages had undergone a great change, to which the corrector wished arbitrarily to conform the text of his author, are plentifully scattered through Mr. Collier's volume. Here are a few of them. First, upon a passage in the second scene of the *Merchant of Venice*.

"In order not to offend James I., the word 'Scottish' of the quartos, published more than two years before he came to the throne, was altered in the folio, 1623, to *other*, in Nerissa's question, 'what think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?' In the folio, 1632, the word *other* is struck through with a pen, and *Irish* placed in the margin, as if it had not been considered objectionable, in the time of the corrector, so to stigmatize Irish lords."

But Irishmen were not so stigmatized in England until ten years after the publication of the second folio, that is, nineteen years after the publication of the original text. The rebellion in Ireland broke out in 1641.

Again, remarking on a change in the last scene in *Hamlet*, Mr. Collier says,

"The lines put into the mouth of Horatio are these, as they stand in every edition, Hamlet having just expired:—

'Now cracks a noble heart—Good night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.'

"However, it seems to have been thought about the time the abbreviations were made, that the tragedy ought to end with a rhyming couplet, and we may infer that the alteration we meet with in the folio, 1632, was made for the purpose:—

'Now cracks a noble heart—Good night, *be blest*,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.'"

Rhyming couplets at the close of a play are common enough in the works of Shakespeare's contemporaries and immediate predecessors; but the idea that a play "ought to end with a rhyming couplet" came in with the French taste of the Restoration. Dryden's plays in verse invariably end thus; and I cannot remember a poetical drama produced by one of his contemporaries which does not bring up with a similar jingle; which too, is tacked to nearly all, if not all the prose comedies of that day.

A MS. stage direction in the first scene of *Much Ado About Nothing*, gives Mr. Collier occasion to remark:

"Another change in the same stage direction merits notice: it is that the word 'Messenger' is converted into *Gentleman*, and the manner in which he joins in the conversation shows, that he must have been a person superior in rank to what we now understand by a messenger. Consistently with this notion, all the prefixes to what he says are altered from *Mes.* to *Gent.* In other dramas Shakespeare gives important parts to persons whom he only calls Messengers; and it requires no proof that in the reign of Elizabeth the Messengers who conveyed news to the Court from abroad were frequently officers whose services were in part rewarded by this distinction. It was in this capacity that Raleigh seems first to have attracted the favour of the Queen."

This custom was not changed in England until long after the time of the Great Rebellion, as all familiar with the literature and manners of the time, must remember:—another incontestable proof of the late date of the MS. corrector's work. To many such, might be added changes of phrase, and other like variations to suit a change of taste; but these are enough to establish the point.

There are several instances in which Mr. Collier himself confesses that the MS. corrector made his changes simply because HE *did not understand* the text. As, for instance, in the passage in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III. Sc. 2,





"Two lovely berries moulded on one stem :  
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart ;  
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry," &c.,

he wantonly changes the first line to,

"Two *loving* berries moulded on one stem :"

and, as Mr. Collier says,

"The heraldic couplet which follows, is struck out by the same hand, probably because, like most other readers, *he did not understand it.*"

Upon a passage in the *Comedy of Errors*, Act II. Sc. 1, Mr. Collier says,

"It is worth while to mention that the line,

'I see the jewel best enamelled,'

and the two next lines (the folio, 1632, omits two others in the folio, 1623), are struck out, perhaps, as *unintelligible to the manuscript corrector, he having no means of setting the passage right.*"

Three lines at one fell swoop ! Insatiate, would not one suffice ! And this, too, merely because they were unintelligible to him ; and after the second folio had already cut out two lines more from the original ! These are but specimens. And this is *emending* Shakespeare's text by "a higher authority" than that used by his first editors !

That the corrections were founded entirely upon caprice or conjecture, is again evident from passages like the following, upon a line in *King Richard II.*, Act IV. Sc. 1, which are common in Mr. Collier's book :

"The folio, 1632, misprints the following line—

'Give sorrow leave a while to tutor me,'—

by absurdly putting *return* for 'tutor.' This blunder is set

right by the old corrector ; but it seems as if *he had previously substituted some other word*, and had erased it. Such may have been the case in several other places where he himself blundered."

Again, upon a passage in *King Richard II.*, Act V. Sc. 5, Mr. Collier remarks,—

"On the next page, he struck out the whole of the passage in which the King resembles himself to a clock, which none of the commentators have been able to understand : the erasure begins at 'For now hath time,' and ends at 'Jack o' the clock.' It is to be regretted that the old corrector could throw no light upon this obscure question : it deserves remark, however, that he struck out the word 'watches,' as if it were certainly wrong ; *but, as if he did not know what ought to be substituted for it*, he has written no corresponding word in the margin."

Some of the corrections which, from their plausibility and apparently easy solution of a great difficulty, have been urged as evidence that the MS. corrector worked, not upon conjecture, but authority, were, unfortunately for this conclusion, made during the last hundred years, by some of the various commentators. Two striking instances will suffice as examples.

In the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act I. Sc. 3, *Falstaff* says of *Mrs. Ford*,

"She carves, she gives the leer of invitation."

This the MS. corrector changes to

"She *craves*, she gives the leer," &c.,

and the simplicity of this correction of a passage which has given learned commentators much trouble, is hailed with a shout of exultation. The new reading cannot be admitted ; but it is not my purpose to explain here why it cannot, but merely to show that it required no "authority"

to make it, whether it be good or bad. It is one of the conjectures of so foolish a fellow—we have seen how foolish—as Zachary Jackson ! who thus presented it more than thirty years ago.

“ ‘ *Falstaff*. I spy entertainment in her ; she discourses, ~~she~~ carves, she gives the leer of invitation.’ ”

“ No doubt Mrs. Ford was an excellent *carver*, perhaps equal to any in Windsor ; and entertained her friends with choice viands : but the *entertainment* to which Falstaff alludes being that of love, her adroitness in the art of *carving* is not absolutely necessary.

“ Falstaff has *spied* a certain *craving* in the eye of this *mer-ry wife* ; and as she has given him the *leer of invitation*, he, in his lascivious humour, says,—

‘ She *craves*, she gives the leer of invitation.’ ”

The next instance brings in a more important disputant for the honors of emendation. In the *Taming of the Shrew*, Act I. Sc. 2, *Tranio*, who has arrived at Padua, with his master, who is to attend the University there, says in the original,

“ Let’s be no stoicks, nor no stocks I pray,  
Or so devote to Aristotle’s checks  
As Ovid be an outcast quite abjured.”

Mr. Collier says, “ our quotation is the same in all impressions, ancient and modern,” and adds :—

“ What are ‘ Aristotle’s checks ? ’ Undoubtedly a misprint for Aristotle’s *ethics*, formerly spelt *ethicks*, and hence the absurd blunder.

‘ Or so devote to Aristotle’s *ethicks* ’

is the line as it stands *authoritatively* corrected in the margin of the folio of 1632.”

This plausible and ingenious correction, which I yet think uncalled for and inadmissible, has been pointed out by others

than Mr. Collier, as conclusive evidence that the corrector must have had "authority." But it was made by no less a personage than Blackstone, a hundred years ago, and appears in the text of the Chiswick edition. Mr. Collier was careless.

It may not be impertinent to notice here, that several of the most plausible new emendations in Mr. Collier's folio, were suggested three years and more ago, by the present writer, who could not by any possibility have seen the MS. corrections. I will only instance "*Rebellion's* head" for "Rebellious head," in Act IV. Sc. 1, of *Macbeth*; "no more *flights*" for "no more sights," in the same scene of the same play; and "Ne'er *knows* retiring ebb" for "Ne'er keeps retiring ebb," in *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3. These stand with several others, upon a copy of Shakespeare which I have collated with the text of the original folio, Steevens' reprint of the twenty quartos, and the comments of nearly all the commentators,—the noteworthy readings and my own conjectures being recorded in the margin. They, with the host of similar instances which appear in Mr. Collier's volume, prove conclusively, that no "authority" was necessary for the suggestion of such alterations in the text.

Though I have exhibited the various incapacity of Mr. Collier's MS. corrector, the late date of his labors, and his self-demonstrated want of any acknowledged authority upon which to base his corrections, only by the quotation of a comparatively few passages from Mr. Collier's book, I am yet able to speak of it as a whole, and in detail, from actual examination and re-examination, collation and re-collation, of every change which it proposes in the received text of Shakespeare. Mr. Collier alludes to the number of those changes as "considerably more than one thousand." I can tell him exactly how many there are. Setting aside trivial stage directions, there are *thir-*

*teen hundred and three* modifications of the text of the second folio, proposed in Mr. Collier's "Notes and Emendations," based on the MS. correction in his copy of the folio of 1632.

Of these thirteen hundred and three, I have found that at least *two hundred and forty-nine* are old ; that is, are either restorations of the text of the original folio, adoptions of readings from the old quartos, or identical with the conjectural emendations of editors and commentators during the last hundred and fifty years. I say 'at least' that number, because, although my collation has been as thorough as circumstances would admit, it is more than probable that many cases of coincident reading have escaped me.

Of these two hundred and forty-nine old readings, *twenty-nine* have long ago been rejected by common consent, as unworthy of the least attention ; *forty-seven* are rejected from the text, but have a certain plausibility ; and *one hundred and seventy-three* are found in the received text.

The proposed modifications in the received text, which are peculiar to Mr. Collier's folio, are *one thousand and fifty-four* in number ; of which, judging upon the principles which my readers can see, from the previous portion of this review, have governed me, *eight hundred and eighteen*, or over *eight tenths*—an overwhelming majority—are to be utterly rejected, as unworthy of the least attention, and the fruits only of blind ignorance, patient dulness, and wanton presumption.

Of the remaining two hundred and thirty-six, now proposed for the first time, at least *one hundred and nineteen* are inadmissible, though not unworthy of notice ; leaving only *one hundred and seventeen*, which seem to be plausible corrections, if, indeed, the passages to which they apply need

correction. I again say, 'seem to be,' for this number must inevitably be much reduced upon the discussion of the merits of the readings among the best Shakesperian critics.

We have, then, in Mr. Collier's book :—

Old readings, unworthy attention, . . . . .	29	
" " inadmissible, but plausible, . . . . .	47	
" " already received, . . . . .	173	
	<hr/>	249
New readings, unworthy attention, . . . . .	818	
" " inadmissible, but not unworthy of attention, . . . . .	119	
" " plausible, . . . . .	117	
	<hr/>	1054
		<hr/>
		1303
		<hr/>
Inadmissible old readings, 29 + 47 . . . . .	76	
" new " 818 + 119 . . . . .	937	
	<hr/>	
Total of palpably inadmissible readings, . . . . .	1013	

We reach, then, this conclusion, that Mr. Collier has put forth under the sanction of his name, a volume, as the "Plays of William Shakespeare," which contains at least *one thousand and thirteen inadmissible alterations from the original text !!!* Is it not dealing gently with the editor, to speak of such a proceeding, only as insufferable and inexcusable presumption?—presumption which is not in the least atoned for, not even palliated, by the fact that the same volume contains a few corrections which present claims, yet to be discussed, to a place in the received text.

If it be asked why these few are to be (possibly) received, while more than one thousand and thirteen are to be positively rejected, and how those few which may be admissible, were made by the man who made the one thousand and thirteen which are inadmissible,—I reply, that such of the few as are to be received, will be received entirely upon their own merits, as arbitrary conjectural emen-

dations of passages which are evidently misprinted in the original, and also that they were made by the happy conjectures of *several correctors*. For we have seen that at least two hundred and forty-nine of the MS. corrector's changes are not derived from any source peculiarly his own, and that a large number of these have been made by Shakespeare's various editors and commentators,—some of them even more wrongheaded than the folio guesser himself; which incontestably proves that no authority was necessary to the making of these corrections, and, as a corollary to that conclusion, not to the making of the others.

That the emendations were the work of more than one hand, will, I think, be plain to any one accustomed to read old manuscript, or any manuscript in fact, upon an examination of the very *fac-simile* page, which Mr. Collier, with the openness which has marked his conduct of the whole of this matter, published with his "Notes and Emendations." Upon a comparison of the manuscript line,

"So, rushing in the bowels of the French,"

about one-third down the page, with "briefly," "e," and "now," about two-thirds down, and "same" at the top of the page, it will be seen that the former is of an older date than the four latter, which are not only more modern, but bear the marks of a bolder, heavier hand. In the former, the formation of the letters is plainly upon a different, and as plainly, more ancient model, than that traceable in the latter; and the one has a painstaking, though uncertain air, while the other shows a rapid and bold, though clear and decided hand. The oldest of these hands is not more antique in appearance than much manuscript which I have seen, dated during the third and last quarters of the seventeenth century: and the most modern seems not too old to have been written in the second quarter of the eighteenth.

The conclusion that the MS. corrections are the work of more than one hand, is strongly fortified by the fact, which has an important bearing on the whole question, that during the latter half of the seventeenth century and the first years of the eighteenth, the manuscript correction of folios seems not to have been uncommon. This was natural enough ; for readers of Shakespeare could not but see the numberless typographical errors which deformed the early editions ; and some would naturally be tempted to correct them, and to make the text conform to the representations upon the stage of their own day, by cutting it down, adding stage directions, &c. Accordingly we find it recorded in Wilson's *Shaksperiana*, published in 1827, that at the sale of the library of a Mr. Dent, who was a devoted collector of books upon our early literature, and which took place in the early part of this century, a corrected folio of this kind was sold for a large price. It is thus described :

"THIRD EDITION, folio, 1663.

"Mr. Dent's copy sold for 65*l.* 2*s.* It contained many manuscript emendations, chiefly in an ancient hand, coeval with the date of the edition. The annotations in question were, in many respects, curious and important, consisting of stage directions, alterations in the punctuation, &c."—WILSON'S *Shaksperiana*, p. 63.

The description of this folio, which, in its MS. "*stage directions*, alterations in the punctuation, &c.," so much resembles Mr. Collier's, might have applied to that identical volume, except that Mr. Dent's copy was not the second but the third folio. But it should be remarked that the emendations in this had certainly been made by men of different generations, for they were not altogether, but "*chiefly*, in an ancient hand." Where is Mr. Dent's copy ? \* It may contain a few valuable hints ; and it

\* Mr. Dent's folio is in the possession of Mr. Halliwell, as I have learned by a note from that gentleman, received while this volume is going through



certainly has equal claims to attention with Mr. Collier's. Mr. Singer, the editor of the Chiswick edition, has also one of these corrected folios, and knows of others. As the second, third and fourth folios, and even the first, became so worthless for ordinary use after the labors of Rowe and Theobald, it is a wonder that so many which contained MS. corrections, survived to the beginning of this century, when the rage for Shaksperiana came in to preserve them.

I must be permitted to express my regret at the incessant insinuations made by Mr. Singer in his "Text of Shakespeare Vindicated," &c., that Mr. Collier's folio is a fabrication in which the possessor is implicated. Mr. Collier's previous service in the cause of Shaksperian literature should have protected him against so needless, and therefore unjustifiable, an accusation. Without a doubt Mr. Collier believes in the antiquity as well as the value of the emendations in his folio ; and that some of them are about a hundred and seventy-five years old, there can be no question. The many coincidences with the conjectures of editors of the seventeenth century, are, doubtless, the result of the fortunes of the volume, which threw it into the hands of two or three emenders of that period, as we have seen was the case with Mr. Dent's.

My course in treating this important question,—the most important which has arisen in the history of Shaksperian literature,—has been, not to examine the proposed emendations in detail, but to classify the changes in Mr. Collier's folio, and draw conclusions from the number and diverse character of those classes. The former course,—the easier,—would merely have made public the coincidence

the press, and written in answer to the above query, which was put in the paper on the Text of Shakespeare in *Putnam's Magazine* for October, 1853. Mr. Halliwell is collating Mr. Dent's copy and some others, containing similar annotations, for his superb folio edition ; but, he says that he finds them to be of little critical value.

or difference of opinion between individuals : the latter, starting from recorded facts, and attaining its end by deductions inevitable from those facts, decides the question with the powers of both authority and reason.

Let us now briefly recapitulate the conclusions to which we (reader and author) have, I trust, arrived.

We have seen that the text of Shakespeare suffered sorely at the outset from its first printers, and that their errors have been the occasion of its undergoing quite as much from the presumption and incapacity of his editors and critics ; and that, to use the phrase of his player friends, "from the most able to him that could but spell," all his editors, critics and commentators, with two or three exceptions, have wantonly, impertinently, and ignorantly mutilated his works. We have seen that great abilities have not preserved his editors and critics from the worst and most ridiculous errors ; for the narrow pedagogism of Seymour, the blatant stupidity of Becket, and the complacent feeble-mindedness of Jackson, did not seek to commit more insufferable outrages upon the text, than were for a time actually effected by the conceited wantonness of Pope,\* the

\* The justice of applying this epithet to Pope, as an editor, will not be denied by any one familiar with Shakesperian literature. The following jewel of annotation from the *Variorum* edition, and another from Pope's own edition, will amuse the general reader, and satisfy him as to the character of Pope's editorial labors. The first is upon that passage in the masquerade scene of *Romeo and Juliet* in which old *Capulet* welcomes his guests, and says,

"Gentlemen, welcome! ladies that have their toes  
Unplagued with corns will have a bout with you."

"—Their toes—] Thus all the ancient copies. The modern editors, following Mr. Pope, read, with more delicacy—their *feet*. An editor, by such capricious alterations, deprives the reader of the means of judging of the manners of different ages : for the word employed in the text undoubtedly did not appear indelicate to the audience of Shakespeare's time, though perhaps it would not be endured at this day."

This strange mixture of common sense and preposterous, indelicate

arrogance of Warburton, the solemn inflexibility of Johnson, and the smartness and mechanical ear of Steevens.

With regard to Mr. Collier's corrected folio, it has plainly appeared, from its own pages, and from the records of Shakesperian literature—

That it possesses in itself no authority :

That, consequently, its proposed emendations must depend for acceptance entirely upon their intrinsic worth :

That the corrector did not feel the Poetry of Shakespeare :

That he did not take his Wit :

That he violated the Dramatic Propriety which Shakespeare observed :

That his corrections were made in disregard of the context :

That they were not made until after the Restoration, when Shakespeare's contemporaries had passed away, and emendation must have been conjectural :

That the corrector disregarded the tastes and customs of Shakespeare's day, and sought to make Shakespeare's text conform to the taste and customs of his own day :

That he made changes in the text merely because he did not understand it :

That he blundered in making his corrections, and was

squeamishness, is from the pen of Malone. Steevens follows him; and gravely quotes from *Comus* to show that the harmless word which means the fingers of the feet "was endured, at least, in the time of Milton."

In the same play, Act III. Sc. 4, Pope has this note. "Some few unnecessary verses are omitted in this scene, according to the oldest editions." For "this scene," we may read 'the whole play;' for Mr. Pope (he was then only Mr. Pope) took the liberty of rejecting just what he pleased of the additions which Shakespeare made to his first draught of this charming tragedy. Ample justification for the application of far more sweeping terms of condemnation to the editorial labors of Pope, Johnson and their compeers, will be found profusely scattered through the remainder of this volume.

obliged to erase them, and substitute others ; which could not have been the case if he had had " authority : "

That the corrections which would seem most conclusively to show that he had authority, have been effected by the mere conjectures of others, and some of them by persons of very slender abilities :

That of one thousand one hundred and three proposed changes in the text of the folio of 1632, at least *one thousand and thirteen are entirely inadmissible* into the original text ; and that of the remainder, one hundred and seventy-three are already a part of the received text, leaving one hundred and seventeen, *a little more than one-twelfth* of the entire number, from which future editors may carefully select emendations :

That it is highly probable, to say the least, that correctors of two or three generations labored upon this volume :

That there are other existing folios, similar in every respect to this, and entitled to no less deference,—that is, to none :

And, finally, that this folio is filled with errors of all the various kinds committed by editors and commentators, of every grade of capacity and incapacity, during the last hundred and fifty years ; and that it contains a large number of the specific mutilations perpetrated by them, and adds to those more than have heretofore been attempted by all the mutilators of the text combined.

The conclusions forced upon us by this stubborn array, attach, not only to individual changes in Mr. Collier's folio, but to the whole of the manuscript corrections, as far as their pretence to authority, or to any other consideration than that due to their intrinsic excellence is concerned ;—and those conclusions are, that the volume which contains them is utterly worthless as an authority, and that at least eleven



twelfths of them are not entitled to the slightest consideration, even as conjectures.

After being compelled to such conclusions, it is difficult to understand how Mr. Collier could have been blind to the incontestable facts which establish them. The MS. corrections of this folio, warmly welcomed every where at first, are now, with a few exceptions, condemned by Knight, Halliwell, and Singer, the principal editors of Shakespeare, and by the Rev. Alexander Dyce, the distinguished dramatic scholar and critic, who has not yet edited Shakespeare, and has therefore no pet text to defend. Dr. Delius, too, the eminent German critic,—and to attain eminence as a critic of Shakespeare in Germany, implies, perhaps, a profounder scholarship and keener insight than to reach the same position in England,—Dr. Delius admits but *seventeen* emendations out of the whole thirteen hundred and three. Such a change in all quarters, from welcoming expectation to a scornful rejection of almost the entire labors of the corrector, and which, it must be remembered, has been worked *by the emendations themselves*, shows how utterly they are at variance with the spirit which Shakesperian scholars have imbibed from the works of their great master; and how inconsistent they are with the language, customs, and tone of thought of Shakespeare's day, with which the students of his works must needs make themselves familiar. In endeavoring to account for the singular fatuity which led Mr. Collier to embody them ruthlessly in a text which he calls "The Plays of Shakespeare," it is both just and charitable to conclude that, intoxicated with the delight which he would naturally feel at making a discovery which seemed at first to promise so much for the cause to which he has devoted not a little of his life, he looked only at its brightest points, and saw those double; and that we may safely expect to be able ere long, to appeal from Collier drunk

with anticipated good fortune, to Collier sobered with reflection upon almost unmitigated disappointment.

It is worth while to devote a portion of this review to the consideration of a few readings of Mr. Collier's folio which form a class by themselves. These are the entire lines which, in five or six places, are inserted to supply a lacking rhyme or complete a deficient sense. These cannot in any instance be received, no matter how great the deficiency which they attempt to make up, or how remarkable their intrinsic merits ;—and for this very conclusive and obvious reason.—They are not emendations of typographical errors, not the correction of that which is ill done, but the doing of that which was left undone. If there were evidence that they came from Shakespeare himself, they would be necessarily received, no matter how poor they were ; that evidence not existing, they must be rejected, no matter how good or apt they are. They could be received only upon unquestionable authority ; for they have no other basis on which to stand, not even the support of an erroneous text. They are 'made out of whole cloth.' As far as their authority is concerned, we know that they could not possibly have been supplied until sixteen years after Shakespeare's death ; for the edition on the margins of a copy of which they are written was not published until 1632, and he died in 1616 ; and, besides, we have plainly seen that some of the corrections could not possibly have been made before 1662, when Davenant introduced the first scenery ever exhibited upon a public stage in England. Now, the interpolation of an entire line by one man in 1662, is as little justifiable as the interpolation of an entire scene by another man in 1762 or 1853. There is the same lack of authority for each. The addition is worth just as much in one case as in the other.

It must also be noted that, as these lines, if received at

all, must be received *upon authority*, if we admit one, we must admit all. To do otherwise would be to sit in judgment upon Shakespeare's right to write his own plays as he pleased. We must therefore receive into the text the following line which is printed in italic letter, if we receive any which are similarly inserted in Mr. Collier's folio :

" Q. *Margaret*,—Give up your staff, Sir, and the King his realm.  
*Gloster*.—My staff!—here, noble Henry, is my staff:  
*To think I fain would keep it makes me laugh.*"

What must be the capacity of a man to understand, much more, to emend Shakespeare's text, who could perpetrate such a ridiculous abomination as this, merely for the purpose of supplying a rhyme?—for it must be remarked that the sense is perfect and clear without it. Who will not be grateful that there is no authority which compels us to receive such a platitude as Shakespeare's?—and if not *this*, then no other line ; for all not furnished us "by authentic copies, printed or manuscript," must be regarded as interpolation. If a line be wanting in the text, the hiatus must remain until it is filled up by these "authentic copies."

These remarks apply, with equal force, to the arbitrary changes of a word or more at the end of a line, for the purposes of rhyme. As for instance :

"Bid him farewell ; commit him to the grave ;  
 Do him that kindness, and take leave of him."

For this the MS. corrector audaciously substitutes,

"Bid him farewell ; commit him to the grave ;  
 Do him that kindness—*all that he can have.*"

That is, he takes out five words from the original text, and substitutes for them five others, changing the construction of the sentence to admit them, in order that two lines may

rhyme ! To consider gravely such mangling of the text, is to waste words and patience. And, as before, what applies to one instance, applies to all others of the same nature. We cannot permit any man to mutilate Shakespeare's text, even to better it,—in the estimation of himself or a thousand like him.

With two exceptions, then, all these lines and rhyming terminations of lines must be regarded as unwarrantable interpolations. These two exceptions occur in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act I. Sc. 3, and in *King Henry V.*, Act. III. Sc. 2. In the first instance the *Clown* sings a fragment of an old ballad which is thus mutilated in the original text :—the extract will give the reader an idea of the careless and make-shift manner in which the first folio was printed :

“ Was this faire face the cause, quoth she,  
Why the Grecians sacked *Troy*  
Fond done, done, fond was this king *Priam's* joy  
With that she sighed as she stood, *bis*

And gave this sentence then, among nine bad if one be good, among nine bad if one be good, there's yet one good in ten.”

This Mr. Collier's folio corrects, by making a transposition in the first line and an addition to the second, so that the first stanza, when properly divided into lines, reads as follows :

“ Was this fair face, quoth she, the cause  
Why the Grecians sacked *Troy* !  
Fond done, done fond, good sooth it was.  
Was this King *Priam's* joy.”

This emendation is to be received solely because of the fact that the text is evidently but a quotation of a popular jingling song which had survived to the time of the MS. corrector. The corrector's authority for it was the same as



Shakespeare's,—that is, *its existence in the mouths of the people*. Thus, if the following version of some well-known historical lines were found in Shakespeare, it would evidently need emendation :

“Old King Cole  
Was a merry old soul ;  
And a merry old soul *he was*.  
He call'd for his pipe,  
And he called for his fiddlers three.”

In such a case there could not be the slightest hesitation in printing the third line,

“And a merry old soul *was he*,”

or in inserting,

“And he call'd for his bowl,”

as the fifth line ; because the rhyme is one of indefinable origin and antiquity, which has not yet died out of the popular ear ; and our authority for it would be the same that Shakespeare's would, in that case, have been. The other instance is in the restoration of “*To all and some*” and “*feel the same*” to an old song which *Pistol* spouts, in *King Henry V.* These are to be received for the reasons which we have just alleged. Nevertheless, in both instances, the restored line and words should be printed within brackets, to show that they are restorations : so zealously should the text of Shakespeare be guarded even in its least important parts.

The publication of Mr. Collier's “Notes and Emendations,” and especially of his recently issued “Plays of Shakespeare,” so called, gave rise to serious apprehension for the present integrity, at least, of the text of those works which are the pride of our race, and our tongue. But the common sense of the world bids fair to disappoint such

fears. The very few admissible readings in these volumes will be received, and the mass of them will be,—are, already rejected. In Shakespeare's own words, "out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety." If, out of the whole thirteen hundred proposed changes, but thirteen prove to be admissible corrections of passages in the original text, which need correction, the discovery and the discussion consequent upon it will not have been in vain. To restore a single passage in Shakespeare's text rewards much critical toil. He who discovers the needful word for the misprint "*runawayes eyes*," in the second scene of the third act of *Romeo and Juliet*, will secure the honorable mention of his name as long as the English language is read and spoken.

The most important lesson to be derived from our previous glance at the history of Shakespeare's text and the examination of Mr. Collier's folio which we have just finished, is not confined to the merits of the latter. Does it not teach us, conclusively, that the only source of any *authority* for the text of Shakespeare is in the original folio, which was published in 1623 by his friends, fellow-actors, and business partners: that when that text is utterly incomprehensible from the typographical errors which deform it, and *then only*, we should seek emendations: that those emendations should be first looked for in the quartos, because they were contemporaneous with Shakespeare, although surreptitiously published, or, at least entirely neglected by him: that only such corrupted passages as the quartos do not make clear are proper subjects for the exercise of conjecture; and that such of these as conjecture does not amend, in a manner at once consistent with the context, with common sense, and with the language and customs of Shakespeare's day, should be allowed to stand untouched; because the experience of a century and a half has taught us that when the original text seems incompre-

hensible, the difficulty may possibly be with ourselves ; but, chiefly, because it is better to have in the works of Shakespeare an obscure text which *may be* Shakespeare's, than one which is clear, but with the light of another mind than his ?



**NOTES AND COMMENTS.**



## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

*Pedant.* What mening hath your worsbyp?

*Syr John.*

Nor lesse, nor more.

What I saie:

*The Wyse Man's Folie.*—Old MS.

"And if by chaunce thou light of some speache that seemeth dark, consider of it with judgment, before thou condemne the worke: for in many places he is driven both to praise and blame with one breath, which in readinge will seeme hard, and in action appeare plaine."

*Promos & Cussandra.* [The Printer to the Reader.

NOT what Shakespeare might, could, would, or should have written, but what, according to the best evidence, he did write, is the only admissible or defensible object of the labors of his editors and verbal critics. Obviously true as this is, its binding force has been regarded by but a very few of the many who have undertaken the supervision or correction of Shakespeare's text. They have not simply sought the word, the expression, or the line which the authentic copy gives in this or that passage; but each has undertaken to decide what it should be, by exercising his own taste in choosing from the text of the various ancient copies which accident or fraud gave to the world, or by substituting that which, in his judgment, the poet should have written.

With the labors of such critics I have no sympathy; for such labors I can imagine no excuse. To me they are folly, presumption, desecration,—literary crimes which should be remorselessly denounced, let them be perpetrated by whom they may. During the patient study of years, I have day by day become more and more convinced that the authentic text of Shakespeare cannot be held in too great

veneration or modified with too great caution. A passage there may seem obscure through a thousand painful perusals, and yet upon the next, a meaning may flash upon us so apposite, so brilliant, as to mingle with the pleasure of discovery some shame at the perversity which delayed the enjoyment, and the presumption which proposed a feeble substitute in place of it.

“Let no man,” said Schlegel, “lay hand on Shakespeare’s works to change any thing essential in them ; he will be sure to punish himself.” Yes, let *no man* do it, whatever his learning or his ability. How different the opinion of the literary celebrities of the past age was from that of Schlegel, the following pages will bear evidence; and that the exposures which they make are not superfluous, may be justly concluded from the fact that the *London Quarterly Review* but recently expressed the opinion that Dr. Johnson’s notes commanded the deference of his readers, and that a competent editor would be contented with reproducing them in their integrity ! Such an assertion, by a sane man, can only be accounted for on the supposition that he had either not read Shakespeare, or had not seen Johnson’s notes. The ‘great moralist,’ however, is among the best of a class under the infliction of whose treatment Shakespeare’s text is still suffering, and on account of the perverse and unsympathizing nature of whose criticisms even his wondrous creations are still misapprehended or partially comprehended by a great number of his readers. What a fine thing would it be for Shakespeare and the public if, with the exception of such copies as are necessary for public libraries and the critical students of the text, all the editions issued during the two hundred years subsequent to the publication of the first folio, could be piled in one great heap and set on fire ! Round such a pyre the true lovers of Shakespeare might dance and sing with joy.



In the subsequent Notes and Comments, most of which were written merely as a part of the author's Shakesperian studies, and with no thought of publication, or in the course of daily criticism in the various departments of Art, it will be observed that his constant aim has been to preserve—at first for himself and now for his readers—the simple and obvious signification of the authentic text. Reckless and remorseless have been the inroads upon that text, under the sanction of great names; and so disastrous are the consequences of these ravages, that it cannot be too often asserted that the only guaranty for the integrity of those works which are the glory of our race and of the world, consists in the preservation of the words of the only authentic edition, when those words are understood by minds of ordinary intelligence, or supported by comparison with the language and manners of the author's day, or those of the immediately antecedent age. And not only so,—the learned and ingenious distortions and perversions of the signification of those words, which have been handed down for the last two or three generations, must be set at naught and utterly condemned,—in fact, forgotten, before the bright, broad, genial, all-penetrating light of Shakespeare's thought can reach the general mind in undimmed purity and splendor. Upon the Dramatist of all time even more than upon the father of the Epic, has the ambitious desire of his commentators to see more than he saw, and understand more than he meant, inflicted that wrong which Rabelais thus satirizes with pitiless and truthful pen in the Prologue to his "Pleasant and Joyous History."

"Croyez vous en vostre foy, qu'onceques Homere escripquant l'Ilyade, & Odyssee pensast és allegories lesquelles de luy ont beluté Plutarque, Heraclides Ponticque, Eustatie, & Phornute : & ce que d'iceulx Politian à desrobé ? Si le croyez, vous n'aprouchez ne de pieds, ny de mains à mon opinion, qui decrete icelles

aussi peu auoir esté songées d'Homere, que d'Ouide en ses *Metamorphoses* les sacrements de l'Euangile, lesquelz vng frere Lubin. vray croquelardon, s'est efforcé de monstrier, si d'adventure il rencontroit gens aussi fols que luy, & (comme dict le prouerbe) couuercle digne du chaudron."

Well may it be said, that if we listen to the learned folly of these notemongers we will approach Shakespeare's meaning "*ni de pieds, ni de mains.*" They, like the Homeric commentators, put that into his mouth which was as far from his intent as "*les Sacrements de l'Evangile,*" from the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid.

With regard to conjectural or arbitrary emendations, there is safety only in adhering to the decision of the generally judicious Malone, that all are arbitrary which are "made at the will and pleasure of the conjecturer, and without any authority," and that all readings "not authorized by authentic copies, printed or manuscript, stand on the same footing, and are to be judged of by their reasonableness or probability." The soundness of this position is self-evident ; but the previous pages have established it by an examination of the history of Shakespeare's text from its first publication to the present day.

As to the MS. corrections in Mr. Collier's copy of the second folio, an overwhelming weight of internal evidence has compelled the conclusion that they have no pretension to greater deference than that which is due to mere conjecture, and were made not earlier than about 1670, at which time speculative emendation could have no advantages which it does not possess at the present day, except in the possible survival of a few modes of expression which have since become obsolete ; and even this the MS. corrections, by the numerous evidences which they furnish, that the maker or makers of them did not understand phrases and words which are perfectly understood by English scholars of the present

day, prove to have been no advantage at all. But although these MS. corrections have no semblance of authority, and at least one thousand and thirteen, out of the one thousand three hundred and three, are unworthy of a moment's further consideration, because in the words of Mr. Dyce they are "ignorant, tasteless and wanton;" \* and although, as a highly accomplished and judicious critic has beautifully and justly remarked, "they almost invariably take the fire out of the poetry, the fine tissue out of the thought, the ancient aroma and flavor out of the language;" † still, as I have before observed, the discovery of this corrected folio will prove to be of some service to the text of Shakespeare. Nevertheless, even its most plausible corrections are to receive only the consideration due to them as arbitrary and conjectural, and must be "judged of by their reasonableness and probability." With the thousand and thirteen, new and old, before mentioned, we have of course nothing further to do. Of the remaining two hundred and ninety, one hundred and seventy-three have been a part of the received text for more than a quarter of a century; and these obviously present no claims for present examination. But in the one hundred and seventeen still undisposed of, there are a very few which assert at once an unquestionable claim to be received into the text, and some which are at least worthy of careful consideration before they are rejected. In the course of the following pages I shall examine the inherent merits of the more important of the latter number—the one hundred and seventeen.

\* A Few Notes, &c.—Preface.

† Christian Examiner, Nov. 1853, p. 456.

## TEMPEST.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Ant.* Where is the master, Boson."

ALTHOUGH the authentic folio makes *Antonio* very plainly say "Boson," and the King of Naples, just as plainly, "Boatswain"—in the original, "Boteswaine"—for which "Boson" could not have been a misprint, all the modern editors, with the exception of Mr. Knight, have altered this characteristic contraction to *Boatswain*. *Antonio* is a man of coarse and flippant manners; and he was made by Shakespeare to adopt the cant of the forecastle as an indication of his character. This design is frustrated by the use of the correct form of the word. The editors might as well have mended the English of *Dogberry* or *Sir Hugh Evans*.

Mr. Dyce, in support of the reading *Boatswain*, says that the word was printed "Boson" merely in consequence of "the unsettled state of our early orthography," and quotes passages from Taylor in which it is spelled in three ways, and once, 'Boson.' But this, in my opinion, cannot be permitted to set aside the peculiar fitness of the word in the original to the character of *Antonio*. If it stood the other way,—if in the first folio *Alonzo* said 'boson,' and *Antonio* 'boatswain,' Mr. Dyce's argument would justify a change in the first instance; because then there would



be an obvious incongruity which now does not exist. Besides, it should be remembered that Taylor, who furnishes Mr. Dyce with the spelling, 'Boson,' had been a sailor, and says, as Mr. Dyce himself quotes,

"Seven times at sea I served Elizabeth."

"[*A confused noise within.*] Mercy on us! we split," &c.

These exclamations are evidently a part of the confused noise within, as Johnson suggested. They are entirely foreign to the character of *Gonzalo*, who, besides, had neither wife, children, nor brother that we hear of. But as the words were not sufficiently separated from his speech in the original folio, they have been hitherto attributed to him, except by Johnson and Mr. Knight. Mr. Collier actually breaks up this "confused noise" into heroic lines!

## SCENE 2.

"*Prosp.* Who having unto truth, by telling of it,  
Made such a sinner of his memory  
To credit his own lie."

The construction of this sentence is a little involved, and so the MS. corrector of Collier's folio of 1632 changes the words "unto truth" in the first line, to *to untruth*. But this will never do. How can a man make a *sinner* of his memory to *untruth* by telling a *lie*? The correction achieves nothing but nonsense. The plain construction of the passage, as the original gives it, is, 'Who, having made such a sinner of his memory unto truth, to credit his own lie by telling of it;' which gives us a portrait of a kind of liar that is not uncommon.

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"*Prosp.* Go make thyself like a nymph o' the sea."

Thus, again, the original folio, which Mr. Collier's folio,

with superfluous barbarity changes to, "Go make thyself  
a *like* nymph o' the sea."

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*Ariel's Song.*

"Hark, hark!  
Bow wough [Burthen dispersedly  
The watch dogs bark.  
Bow wough.  
Hark, hark! I hear  
The strain of strutting chanticlere,  
Cry cock-a-didle-dowe."

The last line is thus plainly printed in the original folio; but it has been arbitrarily changed into *cock-a-doodle-doo* by all modern editors. The last could scarcely have been mistaken for the first; and the first rhymes with the "bow-wow" of the burden. This is a small matter; but I notice it because various liberties have been taken, from time to time, with the text of this fanciful song. It should be given just as it stands in the original, by varying from which nothing has been gained; but the contrary.

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"*Ferd.* My prime request,  
Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!  
If you be maid, or no!  
*Mira.* No wonder, Sir;  
But, certainly, a maid."

It would seem impossible to misunderstand this passage, or perhaps it is better to say, to understand it in more than one sense. *Ferdinand*, struck with *Miranda's* wondrous beauty, asks her, as the question in which he is most interested, and just as he would have asked her in any other place if he had no other means of obtaining the momentous information, 'tell me, you wonderful creature, are you maid or wife?' and she replies, with proper modesty, that, though she has no claims to be considered

"a wonder," she is certainly "a maid." But instead of this simple and obvious signification, we have divers far-fetched constructions of the passage thrust upon us by various commentators ; some supposing that *Ferdinand* means to ask *Miranda* if she were *made* or no (such a reading has even been introduced into the text), and that *Miranda* replies that she is "not a celestial being, but a maiden." But if she were a celestial being on earth, she certainly would be "a wonder ;" and her answer is :—

"No wonder, Sir ;  
But, certainly, a maid."

Why should we seek out "fond and winnowed opinions," when there is a plain and palpable signification before us ?

## ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Gonz.* How lush and lusty the grass looks! how green!"

Much doubt exists about the meaning of the word "lush." Knight quotes Henry, as giving it the signification of 'rank,' and Malone, as suggesting that of 'juicy;' and adds that "we have still the low word, lushy, as applied to a drunkard." May not "lush" be a corruption of luscious? In Phillips' *New World of Words* 'luscious' is spelled *lush-ious*.

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"*Gonz.* I' the commonwealth, I would by contraries  
Execute all things. For no kind of traffic  
Would I admit; no name of magistrate.  
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,  
And use of service none;" &c.

This speech of *Gonzalo's* is but a poetical paraphrase of a passage in Montaigne. It has been supposed by many that this fixes the date of the writing of the *Tempest* after 1603, when Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays* was

first published. But this is to assume that Shakespeare did not read French : not the only unwarranted assumption of his editors.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Ferd.* But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours ;  
Most busy-less when I do it."

The original folio has "most busy *lest*," which is evidently a misprint. The best conjectural reading is the above, which was suggested by Theobald. Among the hypothetical emendations of the passage, the most awkward seems to be that of the MS. corrector of Mr. Collier's folio, who makes it "most busy, *blest*, when I do it,"—unless indeed we except Mr. Singer's "most *busiest*," than which nothing could be more graceless and inappropriate.

### ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Ferd.* Let me live here ever :  
So rare a wonder'd father, and a wis  
Makes this place paradise."

Thus the original. But Malone, and others after him, and Mr. Collier's MS. corrector—before him or after him, who can tell, and what does it matter !—read,—

"So rare a wonder'd father, and a *wife*,  
*Make* this place paradise ;"

which is to degrade the poetical feeling of the passage.—I speak under favor of my fairer readers, and as one knowing all the various good implied in the word which I would exclude from the text. But Shakespeare's *poetical* purpose was a higher one than that which this change in the authentic text would assign to him. Besides, the mere fact that the original gives "wise" and "makes," which afford at least



an excellent sense, is an all-sufficient reason for the retention of those words,—even against two better.

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“*Prosp.* And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind:”

Upon this passage Mr. Dyce remarks,—

“So this famous passage stands in all editions old and new. But I believe that Malone's objection to the reading ‘*a rack*,’ is unanswerable. ‘No instance,’ he observes, ‘has yet been produced where *rack* is used to signify *a single small fleeting cloud*;’ in other words,—though our early writers very frequently make mention of ‘*the rack*,’ they never say ‘*a rack*.’ Malone adds, ‘I incline to think that *rack* is a mis-spelling for *wrack*, *i. e.*, wreck;’ and I now am thoroughly convinced that such is the case. In authors of the age of Elizabeth and James I have repeatedly met with *rack* put for *wrack*; and in all the early editions of Milton's *Paradise Lost* which I possess,—viz., the first, 1667, the second, 1674, the third, 1678, the fourth, 1688, and the eighth, 1707,—I find,—

“Now dreadful deeds  
Might have ensued, nor only Paradise  
In this commotion, but the starry cope  
Of Heaven perhaps, or all the elements  
At least had gone to *rack* [*i. e.*, *wrack*=wreck],” &c.

B. iv. 990.

“A world devote to universal *rack* [*i. e.*, *wrack* = wreck].”

B. xi. 821.”

*A Few Notes, &c.* p. 13.

The wonder is, that another opinion should have been entertained by any reader. The dissolution of towers, palaces, temples and the great globe itself, might be said with

propriety not to leave 'a wreck' behind ; but it would be very strange indeed, if it should leave a small fleeting cloud behind ; neither does that object furnish a simile at all appropriate to what would remain after such an all-devouring catastrophe. It is indeed surprising that any one who had ever heard the old phrase 'gone to rack and ruin,' should have had a doubt about the word in question.

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"*Steph.* Now is the jerkin, under the line ; now jerkin you are like to lose your hair, and prove a bald jerkin."

*Stephano's* pun is supposed to allude to the hair lines on which it is said clothes were hung in the time of Shakespeare ; but may not the loss of hair consequent upon being "under the line," be an allusion to the baldness which so frequently attacks northerners when under the heat of the equatorial line ?

[I find in the *Variorum* Ed. a note from Edwards' MSS. which coincides with this, my early conjecture.]

#### ACT V. SCENE 1.

"*Prosp.* His mother was a witch, and one so strong  
That could control the moon ; make flows and ebbs,  
And deal in her command, without her power."

Mr. Collier's MS. corrector changed "without her power," to "*with all* her power," an alteration which appears more than plausible, until we recollect that 'power' is used for 'legitimate authority' to this day. Thus, we say that an officer 'exceeded his powers.' Mr. Charles Knight \* is

\* I credit Mr. Knight with the defence of this reading, only on the authority of *Blackwood's Magazine*,—Aug, 1853, p. 186. I have not seen Mr.

unquestionably right in his defence of the old reading, which cannot be disturbed. *Sycorax* was a witch, "so strong," that she could usurp the functions of the Moon, and "deal in her command without her" legitimate authority.

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OMISSION.

ACT III. SCENE 3.

"Gonz. Each putter out of five for one will bring us," &c.

This line, which refers to the habit of adventurers by sea in Shakespeare's day, to put out a sum of money on condition of receiving five for one, if they chanced to return alive, is evidently corrupt, as was long ago discovered. The voyagers did not put out "five for one," but one for five. So the line has been changed to,

"Each putter out of *one* for *five*," &c.

and to,

"Each putter out *on* five for one," &c.

the former being the most common reading. But surely this is to avoid the most natural correction of the typographical error, and the most appropriate phrase for the expression of the idea. We do not put out money *on* five per cent., we put it out *at* five per cent. ; and these adventurers, instead of putting it out at five for a hundred, put it out at five for one. Read,

"Each putter out *at* five for one will bring us," &c.

Knight's book, or, indeed, the labors of any other of Mr. Collier's opponents, except Mr. Singer, Mr. Dyce, Mr. Halliwell, and the writer in *Blackwood*.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Speed* Ay, sir; I, a lost mutton, gave your letter to her, a laced mutton; and she, a laced mutton, gave me, a lost mutton, nothing for my labour."

"In the present passage, is 'laced mutton,' " asks Mr. Dyce, "to be regarded as synonymous with courtesan? I doubt it. When *Speed* applies that term to *Julia*, he probably uses it in the much less offensive sense of a *richly attired piece of woman's flesh*." Mr. Dyce has well expressed a signification, which, until I read the comments of the *Variorum* men, I took for granted, as that obviously required by the context, and as a point upon which no question could arise. Would *Speed* tell *Proteus* plainly that his mistress was a courtesan? And had he done so, would he have escaped with a sound skin?

### ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Speed* When you look'd sadly, it was for want of money. And now you are metamorphos'd with a mistress, that when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master."

The MS. correction in Mr. Collier's folio, "And now you are *so* Metamorphos'd with a Mistris that when," &c., seems very plausible; but still, with the sentence punctuat-

ed as it is above, I am not sure that the *so* is necessary. *Speed's* meaning is, 'you are metamorphosed with a mistress, *so* that when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master'; and the particle is dropped by a not uncommon, and, it appears to me, rather elegant elision.

## ACT II. SCENE 3.

"*Launce.* This hat is Nan, our maid; I am the dog:—no, the dog is himself and I am the dog,—oh! the dog is *me*, and I am myself."

Will it be believed by those who have not seen it for themselves,—the exquisite confusion of poor *Launce's* feeble ideas is not appreciated by Dr. Johnson and Sir Thomas Hanmer! How delightful is the complacency with which, after doubting whether he is the dog or the dog is himself and he is the dog, he triumphantly extricates himself from his dilemma, by exclaiming: "Oh! the dog is *me*, and I am myself." And yet Dr. Johnson is not certain "how much reason the author intended to bestow on *Launce's* soliloquy," and Sir Thomas Hanmer actually printed the passage, "I am the dog:—no, the dog is himself and I am *me*; the dog is *the dog*, and I am myself." This it was to edit Shakespeare in the 'Augustan age' of English literature! Augustan in what? Its looseness, its servility, its maliciousness, its marrowless thought, its inability to make its philosophy more than an iteration of trite orthodoxy or triter scepticism, or its poetry more than an oily flow of pretty epigrams?

## SCENE 4.

"*Val.* I, my good Lord, I know the gentleman  
To be of worth, and worthy estimation;  
And not without desert so well reputed."

The MS. correction, by Mr. Collier's folio, in the second line,

"To be of *wealth* and worthy estimation,"

seems required by the context, and to be justified by a probable misprint, until we remember that "worthy estimation" may mean, 'the esteem of worthy people.' *Valentine* evidently means to say that the father of *Proteus* is not only "of worth" but "of worthy *estimation*;" and the substitution of *wealth* for "worth" impoverishes both the declaration and the subject of it. "I," in the first line, is the old mode of spelling 'Aye,' and furnishes a guide as to the varying pronunciation of that word.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Proteus*. Even in the milk-white bosom of thy love."

The commentators remark upon this passage, "that the lady of the 16th century had a *pocket in the front of her stays*;" and they suppose this fashion again referred to when *Valentine* says,

"My herald thoughts in thy pure bosom rest them;"

and also in *Hamlet's* fancy,

"These to her excellent white bosom."

What need, what need of all this mantua-making lore! Where have Eve's daughters put their lover's letters and their own nameless little knick-knacks ever since their mother's apron of fig leaves was first accommodated with a boddice? Do lovers send their thoughts to the "pure" *pockets*, the "excellent white" *stays* of their mistresses? What absurd misconstruction of beautiful and appropriate thoughts, for the purpose of displaying a little knowledge of antiquated man-millinery!

The Earl of Surrey, who wrote his poetry to a "lady of

the sixteenth century" (1557), in one of his sonnets thus predicts its happy fate :—

"When she hath read and seen the grief wherein I serve,  
Between her breasts she shall thee put, there shall she thee reserve."

Stays and pockets, forsooth !

[This was written before I saw the *Variorum* edition; and there I find that Malone has quoted this very passage from Surrey; and yet a gentleman of Mr. Charles Knight's taste and sympathetic appreciation of Shakespeare, editing his works in the middle of the nineteenth century, can perpetuate the Mantalini-ism of the tie-wig editors !]

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"*Launce*. He lives not now, that knows me to be in love; yet I am in love; but a team of horse shall not pluck that from me; nor who it is I love; and yet 'tis a woman."

Upon this characteristic exhibition of simplicity, Dr. Johnson remarks that *Launce* is thinking, "I see how Valentine is suffering for telling his love secrets, therefore I will keep mine close." But Steevens comes to the rescue, and adds, "Perhaps Launce was not intended to show so much sense; but here indulges himself in talking contradictory nonsense." *Perhaps*, indeed !

I notice such platitudes as these, that it may be seen and known of all those who cannot or will not wade through the rubbish of the commentators, what thick-headedness seems to have taken possession of men of the last century, when they came to the reading of Shakespeare, although they were, in other respects, able and learned; and also that we may all be warned of the utter folly of relying upon the mere authority of *any* name for the justification of a change in the text as the original folio gives it to us. If that can be understood by men of ordinary common sense, it must be changed at no man's bidding, even for the better.

"*Speed*. Item, 'She is not to be fasting, in respect of her breath.'"

Rowe added *kissed*; and read,

"She is not to be *kissed* fasting, in respect of her breath,"

which has been palmed upon us as Shakespeare's text for a hundred and fifty years. Mr. Collier suggests that the addition was perhaps unnecessary. There's no 'perhaps' in the case: it was certainly unnecessary, and therefore unjustifiable and presumptuous. *Launce's* "cate-log" of the "conditions" of his sweetheart, says that she must not be made to fast, for fear of certain unpleasant physiological consequences. The text has a plain meaning, and by what right does any man make an arbitrary addition to it?

#### ACT V. SCENE 4.

"*Val*. These are my mates that make their wills their law,  
Have some unhappy passenger in chase,"

Mr. Collier's margins propose, with reason, to read—

"These my *rude* mates," &c.

As the sentence stands in the original, "have" is without an antecedent.



## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

*Slender* accuses *Pistol* of having picked his pocket of "two Edward shovel-boards," that cost him two shillings. Shovel-board is a game which is noticed by Strutt, but with regard to which the editors and commentators known to me furnish no information. Mr. Collier, in his edition of *Shakespeare*—not his recent one-volume abomination—says that it is "not yet discontinued, as it is not unfrequently played by the lower orders in the coal trade." The game survived in the vicinity of New-York, till within fifteen or twenty years past, among a similar class of persons. It is now, I believe, no longer known; and I think that the last shovel-board on this side of the water disappeared with the destruction of the place in which I first saw the game—the Eagle Tavern, under Brooklyn Heights, near where the South Ferry landing now is. I little thought, when, at about ten years of age, I strolled away from home one afternoon, with a playmate, now distinguished as an inventor and in the higher mechanics, as he was then for his quickness at computation, and his unerring hand and eye, and yielding to our curiosity, we approached this forbidden place (for it was deservedly in bad repute), and, leaning through a window, saw coarse and brawny men playing at this strange game, that I was acquiring material for a

note on the works of him, whose name, even then, I had learned to speak with boyish reverence.

I saw the game played several times afterward, and once was tempted, with the same companion, to try it myself. It was played with some variation from the rules and even the materials for the game as described by Strutt. The board, which stood about three feet from the floor, was about twenty feet long, and two and a half wide. It was surrounded by a trough, to prevent the weights from falling to the ground. The top was very smooth, and covered with fine white sand. The weights were of brass, and of various sizes, weighing from half a pound to a pound and a half—much heavier, it will be observed, than *Slender's* broad shillings. The object of the game was to drive these weights beyond a certain mark toward the further end of the board, without sending them over the edge into the trough. He who shoved his weight nearest the end, without its falling over, was the victor. To place a weight half way over the edge was the highest success, except to knock away and replace an opponent's weight in that position, which a first-rate player would frequently do. Not to put the weight beyond the line alluded to, was to be 'distanced.' The game required great accuracy of eye and steadiness of hand,—much more than ten-pins, which has entirely replaced it.

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"*Slender*. I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead."

Upon this, Warburton remarks :

"As great a fool as the poet has made *Slender*, it appears, by his boasting of his wealth, his breeding, and his courage, that he knew how to win a woman. This is a fine instance of Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature."

One would like to be a woman for a few minutes to



have the privilege of calling Warburton a brute, and feel amply justified in so doing, by this coarse libel on the sex. But the gross misrepresentation of Shakespeare involved in it, justifies an indignant protest on the part of every one of his readers, of either sex. Where, through the whole wide range of his drama, does he show a woman, worthy of the name, won by a boast of wealth, breeding, and courage? No-where. *Slender* gets on finely by his boasting, does he not! And *Fenton*, because he is poor and is not a braggart, is utterly eclipsed by his wealthy, vaunting rival! Out on such villainous perversion of the poet's meaning—such low views of human nature! Shakespeare had no such grovelling ideas of womanhood. The knowledge of human nature which we recognize in the works of him who seems to have penetrated by an instinct, and at a glance, the heart of ail humanity, is but an exponent of our own intellectual and moral standard. He holds the mirror up, not only to Nature, but to our natures; and Warburton's praise of his own degraded interpretation of this passage, as a "fine instance of Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature," speaks equally for inferiority of his moral tone, and the dulness of his intellectual perception.

## SCENE 3.

"*Fal.* I am glad I am so acquit of his tinder box: his thefts were too open: his filching was like an unskilful singer: he kept not time."

*Nym.* The good humour is to steal at a minute's rest."

Thus the original: but "a minute's rest" is evidently a misprint for "a *minim's* rest," as Langton suggested long ago, and as the corrector of Mr. Collier's folio conjectured. The likening of *Bardolph's* practice of his vocation to that of "an unskilful singer," who "kept not time," is suffi-

cient evidence of this. The typographical error is one which might very easily occur.

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"*Fal.* She discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation."

I have noticed elsewhere the reading *craves* instead of "carves," proposed by Jackson and Mr. Collier's folio. Mr. Hunter and Mr. Dyce show, conclusively, by numerous quotations from contemporary literature, that 'carves' was used in Shakespeare's day, in an amorous, or, at least, propitiatory sense. There is no need, and, therefore, no justification for the change.

#### ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Host.* My hand, bully: thou shalt have egress and regress: said I well? and thy name shall be *Broome*. It is a merry knight. Will you go An-heires!"

Thus the original folio; but this name *Broome*, kills *Falstaff's* pun about brooks o'erflowing with liquor; and, as in the surreptitious quarto of 1602 the name is printed *Brook*, that *alias* has been adopted in all modern editions. But it is to be remarked that in the authentic copy of the play, frequently as the name occurs, it is invariably given, "*Broome*." Now it is almost impossible that *Brook* could have been so often, and without exception, misprinted *Broome*; but it is quite probable that *Bourne*, which means the same as *Brook* (for instance—

"We twa hae paidl't i' the bourn,")

should have been mistaken in manuscript for *Broome*. Mr. Collier's folio makes the change to *Bourne*; and though the world will give up *Master Brook* unwillingly, there seems to be no reasonable doubt, that he should yield place to *Master Bourne*.

Of all the many proposed emendations of the last two incomprehensible words in the original of this passage, Hanmer's *mynheer*, so ably sustained by Mr. Dyce, is the only one which appears to me at all satisfactory. There can be little doubt that "An heires" is a misprint for *min-heires*, a word well suited to the mouth of mine Host.

## SCENE 2.

"*Ford.* O! understand my drift. She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself; she is too bright to be looked against."

Mr. Collier's folio in reading "the folly of my *suit*," instead of "the folly of my soul," seems to correct a not improbable misprint. But what need of any change whatever? Surely a hopeless passion for the chaste wife of another, may well be called the folly of a man's soul.

## ACT III. SCENE 5.

"*Fal.* By the Lord, a buck basket," &c.

Thus, the surreptitious quartos of 1602 and 1619; the authentic folio and the quarto of 1630 giving, "*Yes*, a buck basket." The change was consequent upon a statute made after the accession of James I., which interdicted oaths &c. on the stage. In this way many passages were modified, and some entirely omitted in the first folio: as, for instance, *Falstaff's* remark in the fifth Scene of the fourth Act of this play:—

"Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent;"

which, in the folio, stands tamely, on account of the law in question,

"Well, if my wind were but long enough, I would repent."

—and again, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act IV. Sc. 2, *Dogberry's* reply,

"Write down that they hope they serve God ;—and write God first ; for God forbid but God should go before such villains,"

is altogether omitted. Now, as we want exactly what Shakespeare wrote, and have not the fear of the statute of James I. before our eyes, we must disregard these changes and suppressions in all cases ; and not regard them in some cases and disregard them in others, as many editors have done, and even Mr. Knight among them. On points like these, and these only, the quartos are of higher authority than the folio, because of the effect of the law in question.

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"*Pistol*. Convey, the wise it call. Stealf foh! a *fico* for the phrase."

Nothing could be plainer, it would seem, than this speech, which is remarkable among the bombastic explosions of 'mine ancient' for its direct simplicity. He says, "a fig for the phrase !" and, after his fashion of always using a mouth-filling, high-sounding word, when his memory can command, or his tongue coin one, he uses the Italian, '*fico*,' instead of the English, 'fig.' 'A fig,' or 'a fig's end,' is perhaps the commonest phrase of thoughtless, careless contempt used in our language. It occurs five times in Shakespeare's works. *Pistol* uses it twice, and each time airs his Italian. But as a certain disease was known to the Romans as *ficus*, and as a gesture indicative of loathing and dread, used on the continent of Europe, and which is of ancient and unknown origin, was called 'making the fig,' even Mr. Douce could not resist the temptation to confuse so plain a passage by learned disquisition ; and consequently he perpetrates nine octavo pages of grave and erudite comment upon poor *Pistol's*

"*fico*." How it would have gratified the ancient had he known that his speech would attain to such consequence and dignity ! Mr. Douce thus concludes his remarks :—

"On the whole, there is no other way of extricating ourselves from the difficulties and ambiguities that attend the present subject, than by supposing some little confusion of ideas in our poet's mind, a weakness not more uncommon with him than with many of his commentators. Or, his phraseology might have been inaccurate ; and it is to be feared that too much time and conjecture have been frequently expended on passages originally faulty, and which it might have been sufficient to have stated as such, to the exclusion of further comment or useless explanation."

*Illustrations of Shakespeare*, Vol. I. p. 500.

The admission of "a confusion of ideas" on the part of the poet's commentators, is both appropriate and *naïve*, considering the occasion of making it. But what shall be thought of the commentator who allows his learning to involve him in "difficulties and ambiguities" which have no actual existence, and then attempts to extricate himself by attributing confusion of thought and inaccurate phraseology to Shakespeare !

In *Henry IV.*, Part II., Act V. Sc. 3, *Pistol* says :—

"When Pistol lies, do this ; and fig me, like  
The bragging Spaniard."

Here, indeed, there is allusion to 'making the fig.' "Do this," manifestly refers to an action with which the speaker accompanied his words ; "fig" becomes an active verb ; and the comparison to "the bragging Spaniard" comes in to confirm the reference. But this use of the word is no more like that in "*a fico* for the phrase" in this play, or "*a fico* for thy friendship," in *Henry V.*, than it is like that in *Iago's* "Virtue ? a fig," in the third Scene of the first Act of *Othello*, or his "blessed fig's end," in the first Scene of

the second Act. Truly, much learning hath made these commentators mad.

ACT V. SCENE 5.

"*Fal.* Ignorance itself is a *plummet* over me."

Trouble about this. Johnson proposes *plume*, and Farmer, *planet*, instead of "plummet." The matter seems very plain. *Falstaff* is made to appear such an ass, he is so overwhelmed by the reproofs and jeers heaped upon him, —and particularly by *Sir Hugh Evans*, whom *Ford* has quizzed but a moment before for his inability to speak correctly,—that he says: "I am your theme; you have the start of me; I am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welch flannel. Ignorance itself is a plummet over me:" —that is, 'even this blundering Welchman attempts to decide upon my rectitude.' He has but just said, in reply to a gibe from the parson, "Seese and putter! have I lived to stand the taunt of one that makes fritters of English?"





## MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

MR. HUNTER\* thus opens his comments upon *Measure for Measure*.

“ Few of Shakespeare’s plays give so little pleasure as this. The fault is, in a great measure, in the plot, which is improbable and disgusting. But the play wants character. The principal persons are unindividualized men and women, and it may be doubted whether they always exhibit the feeling which really belongs to the strange situations in which they are placed.”

In this opinion he is sustained by Coleridge, and by Mr. Knight. It is prudent, as well as pleasant, to agree with such critics ; but sometimes both policy and preference must needs be set aside ; and I cannot err in supposing that there are many who, though lacking with me the sanction of such opinion, find, with me, in their enjoyment of the transcendent poetry, the subtle and far-reaching thought, and the nicely discriminated characters of this play, an ample compensation for the consciousness that they have opposed their judgments, even to that of Coleridge.

As to the plot, it should be remarked, that though the incidents upon which it turns are such as cannot in these days be made the topics of conversation in gen-

\* New Illustrations of the Life, Studies, and Writings of Shakespeare. By Joseph Hunter. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1845.

eral society, or the subjects of dramatic representation before a polite audience, there is nothing in them to make the play repulsive in the closet. Interdicted, as the story must now be considered in the social circle, there is nothing in it to contaminate the individual. Its themes are excluded from the drawing-room, as we avoid there a discussion of the internal economy of the Lying-in Hospital, or anatomical disquisitions upon the viscera ; though moral taint would not sooner follow upon the just consideration of the one than from the professional examination of the others.

It was not so in the days of Elizabeth and James. Then, ladies of irreproachable character listened to that, in the company of men, and from men, which would offend the ears of a high-bred courtesan of these days. But it may be justly questioned whether women are chaster, men more continent, or society in general has a higher moral tone now, than when *Measure for Measure* was performed before the most unexceptionable audience which the court and city of London could furnish. The elegant dissoluteness of the court of Charles II., and the gross debauchery of the days of the first Georges and their predecessor, do not contrast more strongly with the tone of our society than with that of the public for which Shakespeare wrote ; though many are thoughtlessly apt to attribute somewhat of the social looseness of the former period to that which preceded it by half a century. With regard to the latter,—that of Anne and the first two Georges, which copious contemporary records show to have been marked by an open disregard of almost every restraint upon the relations of the sexes, accompanied by a coarseness of tone truly disgusting, it should be here remembered, that it was for the public of those times that Pope changed “toes” to *feet*, in the fifth Scene of the first Act of *Romeo and Juliet*, for

the sake of "delicacy ;" and that both the dramatist and his poet editor found an apologist in Malone, on the score that "the word employed in the text undoubtedly did not appear indelicate in Shakespeare's time, though perhaps it would not be endured at this day." It may be that now we have the genuine moral purity of 1600, with none of the hypocritical squeamishness of 1750 ; but if *Measure for Measure* be voted intrinsically repulsive on account of its plot, it is to be feared that we have more of the latter and less of the former than we would like to own.

The passion upon which the action of the play hinges is one which nature has made common to mankind, which influences largely the destiny of every one of us, and which tinges more or less deeply the pages of every tale that has lived in the memory of the world. As Shakespeare has represented it in this drama, it is unrestrained, indeed, but it is also unperverted : it tempts to hideous crime, but in itself it is not monstrous. There lurks more moral poison in the damnable metaphysics of one adulterous French romance, or one incestuous German melodrama, than in whole libraries of such plays as this. In the character of the act upon which it turns, and in the decorum of its language, *Hamlet* has no advantage over it. The crime of *Hamlet's* mother and uncle, and the terms in which the son rebukes his parent for her past guilt and warns her against future error,\* to say nothing of the songs of poor, half-crazed *Ophelia*, are much more exceptionable upon the score of delicacy, than any word uttered or deed hinted by the principal characters in *Measure for Measure*. But in neither play is there contamination ; and in the latter, the principal personage, she for whom the play was written, and around whom the others group themselves, is an embodiment of the

\* Act III. Sc. 4.

iciest, the most repelling continence. Nothing repulsive is brought before the reader's eye. The relations of *Claudio* and *Juliet*, while they awaken our pity for their sufferings, warn us against their error. And poor deserted and repudiated *Mariana*, counting through five years the lonely days and nights in that moated grange ! do not her wrongs and her true-hearted devotion plead "trumpet-tongued" against the guilt of her betrothed husband ? As to his dramatic relations with *Isabella*, what influence do they exert, save upon the side of virtue ? Which comes most bravely out from those interviews, the designing villain, or the intended victim ? What *he* says to *her*, is said by scores of scoundrels such as he in scores of other plays, including some of Shakespeare's ; but what *she* says to *him*, and to her brother, about his base designs, finds no such utterance from other lips. I do not envy those who find this plot disgusting. They seem to me to be "more nice than wise."

The principal characters, instead of being "unindividualized men and women," are distinctly drawn embodiments of types, clearly if not strongly marked. There are rulers, upright in intention, and not wanting in wisdom, but who lack administrative force, and who, half conscious of their failing, seek on some pretence to effect that by the hands of others which their own weak wills have failed to consummate. They are thoughtful when they should be active ; and are employed in analyzing the causes or tracing the consequences of crime, when their energies should be bent on its prevention or its punishment. Such a ruler is the *Duke*. His inertness has allowed "strict statutes and most biting laws," which he confesses are "needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds," to sleep for fourteen years ; and his assumption of the monk's cowl is not his first masquerade ; for *Lucio*, who knows nothing of his

present disguise, calls him (Act IV. Sc. 3), "the old fantastical duke of dark corners." Shakespeare seems to have had an ever present consciousness of the essential opposition between the faculties which lead men to reflect and those which impel them to act. This consciousness often appears in his writings; but is never so clearly uttered as in these lines in the soliloquy of *Hamlet*, in the fourth Scene of the fourth Act of the tragedy.

"Now, whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on th' event,—  
A thought, which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom  
And ever three parts coward,—I do not know  
Why yet I live to say, 'This thing's to do.'"

And yet this soliloquy and the scene in which it occurs are cut out of the play as it is acted; because, forsooth, it retards the action. When will people learn that *Hamlet* is *not* a drama of action!

In *Angelo*, Shakespeare has drawn a faithful portrait of the man whose pride is in his eminent respectability—the man who finds it easy to lead a reputable life, and whose whole life is in his good repute. He is a selfish precisian. He is content to be pure when he has no great temptation to be otherwise; but he would seem pure at every hazard. There are men of no remarkable abilities or acquirements who attain position and influence and the deference due to wisdom, solely by the discreteness of their lives, the grave courtliness of their bearing, their composed and collected manner, and the polished preciseness of their speech, which approaches pomposity, but still stops short of it. Such a man Shakespeare has shown us in *Angelo*, and in him alone. *Polonius*—Shakespeare's acute and high-bred courtier, not the jack-a-dandy of the stage,—is an approximation to this type; but he has too much affectation of subtle thought in

his conversation. The man whom *Angelo* represents is always spoken of as 'eminent for his clear common sense and practical views of life,' and would never talk as *Polonius* does about *Hamlet* and *Ophelia* to the *King* and *Queen* in the second Scene of the second Act of the tragedy.

That *Angelo* is punctilious, his first speech in the play, as he enters in obedience to the request of the *Duke*, plainly shows. He says,

"Always obedient to your grace's will,  
I come to know your pleasure."

It needs the manner of a Chesterfield to give those lines their proper utterance,—to make them deferential without servility, and formal without affectation. The *Duke's* reply shows how eminently respectable his deputy was considered by all Vienna; how he was looked to by the public, as a man whose character and conduct fitted him for dignified position, and how reputable were all his antecedents.

"Angelo,  
There is a kind of character in thy life,  
That, to th' observer, doth thy history  
Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings  
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste  
Thyself upon thy virtues, them on thee," &c.

*Claudio* says of him, in the third Scene of this Act, that he

"for a name  
Now puts the drowsy and neglected act  
Freshly on me:—'tis surely for a name:—"

The *Duke* tells *Friar Thomas* that his deputy "stands at a guard with envy;" and he himself, in the solitude of his own chamber, confesses to himself that he takes pride in his own gravity; yet even in that secret place he shrinks from the confession, and says, "let no man hear me."

But *Angelo* is not all hypocrite at first. His gravity, his preciseness, and his respectability, are not mere shams. He is naturally sober, formal, and austere; and having never encountered exactly the sort of temptation which alone could betray him into impropriety, he has been exceedingly proper all his life. His selfish and hard-hearted repudiation of poor *Mariana*, which afterwards appears, would not impeach his respectability then more than it would now. Generosity is one thing; respectability quite another. They are not twins, nor is the latter born of the former. Observe that *Angelo* is naturally too grave to find any amusement in the conversation between the *Clown*, *Froth*, and *Elbow*, in the first Scene of the second Act. *Elbow* brings in, as he says, "two notorious benefactors." The humor of the blunder does not exist for *Angelo*, who, not to be turned from his literal preciseness, solemnly asks,

"Benefactors! Well, what benefactors are they! Are they not malefactors!"

He puts but a curt question or two, and, leaving the affair in the hands of *Escalus*, soon goes out, hoping that his colleague "will find cause to whip them all." There is no affectation about this: he really finds no pleasure in studying the characteristics of such scum; and thinks whipping the best use to which they can be put.

Here it may be pertinent to say, that I cannot agree with those who find in *Elbow* only a feeble imitation of *Dogberry*. He has nothing in common with the guardian of *Messina*, except his ignorance. The pompous self-sufficiency, the ineffable conceit, the affectation of manner which imposes upon *Dogberry's* subordinates, and actually gives him a moral power over them, are entirely wanting in *Elbow*. Although, like *Dogberry*, he was "the poor Duke's officer," he would never have the calm self-confidence to

say, as *Dogberry* does, with half deprecating, half patronizing air, to a nobleman who told him that he was tedious, "Truly for my own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all of your worship." *Elbow* lacks the force and self-possession of *Dogberry*. Feeble-minded, modest, and well meaning, as well as ignorant, he is rather the type of "Goodman *Verger*" in his youth.

But, to return a moment to *Angelo*. The naturally formal and unbending character of his mind is shown in the manner of his answer, when the *Provost* (Act II. Sc. 2), seeking assurance for the act, asks if it be really his will that *Claudio* shall die on the morrow. He does not reply simply 'yes;' but,

"Did I not tell thee yea? Hadst thou not order?  
Why dost thou ask again?"

He cannot conceive of a scruple or doubt entertained by a subordinate, after he has received orders from his superior. Immediately afterward, giving directions about poor *Juliet*, then hourly looking for the birth of her child, he uses no term of pity, does not even call her by her name, but designates her by an epithet which is at once opprobrious, technical, and suited to lips "of wisest censure;" and coldly adds, with a scrupulous regard for propriety, and an equally scrupulous disregard of the appeals of sympathy for such an improper person, no matter what her extremity,

"Let her have needful, but not lavish means."

This is before he has seen *Isabella*, and ere the cold surface of his soul has been ruffled by passion; for we learn afterward, from his own lips, that he has never yet been moved by woman's beauty:

"this virtuous maid  
Subdues me quite. Ever till now  
When men were fond, I smiled, and wondered how."



And he has prided himself, too, on this insensibility to female charms; for when *Isabella* first comes before him, and the *Provost* is about to retire, *Angelo* calls to him—"Stay awhile." There is no need that his subordinate should remain; but *Angelo* wishes to show how unmoved he will be by the tears and the charms of this beautiful young woman. What *Isabella* says of him in the last scene, is more than half true:

"I partly think  
A due sincerity govern'd his deeds  
Till he did look on me,"

for when he leaves her, after their first interview, and she says,

"Heaven keep your honour safe,"

he replies,

"Amen,  
For I am that way going to temptation  
Where prayers cross."

What blindness and prejudice must it be which calls so truthful and carefully drawn a character "unindividualized." Had Shakespeare not left us *Angelo*, one strongly marked type would have been wanting in his panorama of mankind. The same may be said of one other character in the comedy; but that one will be considered elsewhere.

The poetry of this play should ever protect it against such judgments as that passed by Mr. Hunter. In no one of Shakespeare's works, not even in *Hamlet* itself, does that marvellous interfusion of imagination and philosophy, of brilliant fancy and sober thought, taking form in words used with a daring mastery which at once astonishes, delights, and satisfies, which is the grand and peculiar char-

acteristic of Shakespeare's graver moods, and which we call, for want of any other term, Shakesperian, more command our wondering admiration. There is more of it in the great tragedies, for in those there was more occasion for it; but even there it exists only in greater quantity, not in higher perfection, and in no one of the other comedies is it found scattered with so profuse a hand. It seems ruthless to pluck such jewels from their setting; but to avert the prejudice which threatens to cast into the shadow of neglect one of the grandest works of the greatest Poet,—a prejudice largely due to the *litteratrices* of the last century, and worthy of the women and the period when *Dorimants* and *Mirabels* made love to *Aramintas* and *Flippantas*,—it may be pardonable. Are these passages among those which give “little pleasure?”

“*Duke.* Heaven doth with us, as we with torches d  
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues  
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike  
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd,  
But to fine issues: nor nature never lends  
The smallest scruple of her excellence,  
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines  
Herself the glory of a creditor,  
Both thanks and use.”

*Act I. Sc. 1.*

“*Claud.* As surfeit is the father of much fast,  
So every scope by the immoderate use  
Turns to restraint: Our natures do pursue  
(Like rats that ravin down their proper bane)  
A thirsty evil; and when we drink, we die.”

*Act I. Sc. 3.*

“*Isab.* Could great men thunder  
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet;  
For every pelting, petty officer,  
Would use his heaven for thunder: nothing but thunder.—  
Merciful heaven!  
Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,  
Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak,

Than the soft myrtle:—But man, proud man!  
Drest in a little brief authority:  
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,  
His glassy essence,—like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastick tricks before high heaven,  
As make the angels weep; who, with our spleens,  
Would all themselves laugh mortal."

*Act II. Sc. 2.*

Or is it in these words, addressed by the *Duke* to *Claudio* upon his approaching death, words fraught with such a wealth of wisdom for the living or the dying, that the critics seek in vain for pleasure?

"*Duke.* Be absolute for death: either death or life  
Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life,—  
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing  
That none but fools would keep: a breath thou art,  
Servile to all the skiey influences,  
That dost this habitation, where thou keep'st,  
Hourly afflict: merely, thou art death's fool:  
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,  
And yet runn'st toward him still: Thou art not noble;  
For all the accommodations that thou bear'st,  
Are nurs'd by baseness: Thou art by no means valiant;  
For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork  
Of a poor worm: Thy best of rest is sleep,  
And that thou oft provok'st; yet grossly fear'st  
Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself;  
For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains  
That issue out of dust: Happy thou art not;  
For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get;  
And what thou hast, forget'st: Thou art not certain;  
For thy complexion shifts to strange affects,  
After the moon: If thou art rich, thou art poor;  
For, like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,  
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,  
And death unloads thee: Friend hast thou none:  
For thine own bowels, which do call thee sire,  
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,  
Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum,  
For ending thee no sooner: Thou hast nor youth, nor age;  
But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,

Dreaming on both : for all thy blessed youth  
 Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms  
 Of palsied eld ; and when thou art old, and rich,  
 Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,  
 To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this  
 That bears the name of life ! Yet in this life  
 Lie hid more thousand deaths ; yet death we fear,  
 That makes these odds all even."

*Act III. Sc. 1.*

These passages, which are but specimens of numbers like them, some of less bulk, but all of nearly equal beauty, scattered up and down the play, and so interwoven with the structure of the scene that to take them out would be to rend them, show what golden thoughts the poet built into this drama. But besides and beyond these, there is one passage which rivals, if it do not surpass, in sublimity and power any other which came from Shakespeare's pen. It is this.

"*Claud.* Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;  
 To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot:  
 This sensible warm motion to become  
 A kneaded clod ; and the delighted spirit  
 To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
 In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;  
 To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,  
 And blown with restless violence round about  
 The pendent world ; or to be, worse than worst,  
 Of those that lawless and uncertain thoughts  
 Imagine, howling !"

*Act III. Sc. 1.*

Where else is there language so laden with meaning,—so suggestive of thought? Who else would have dared the expression "to lie in cold obstruction?" for who else would have seen that those two words "cold obstruction" tell the whole tale of utter dissolution, which the next two lines illustrate and vary with words and thoughts but little less condensed and pregnant. What a wonderful, strange fit-

ness there is in the use of that word "thrilling!" But I shrink alike from picking this marvellous conception to pieces and from thrusting myself between my readers and their spontaneous admiration of Shakespeare. Yet it should be said about the last two lines of this passage, if it never have been said,—and I believe it never has,—that they possess an awful beauty which it is hardly in the power of language to describe. The idea seems to be but vaguely hinted; and yet an undefined, peculiar dread goes with the words, that would vanish, or dwindle into certain fear, if we were told exactly what they mean. We feel that they have conveyed that to us which they themselves tell us is too horrible for utterance. What can be those monstrous thoughts which ever seem to be about to take on hideous shape, and ever again vanish into formlessness, leaving the tortured spirit howling with rage and horror at it knows not what, save that it is the dim phantasmagoria of the hell it ever bears within itself? What are those thoughts? We must first be damned eternally ere we can know. And yet Shakespeare in half a dozen words has made us feel what they must be.

I do not hesitate to say that there are not other ten such lines as these in the whole range of poetry, except in *Eliphaz*' relation of his vision, in the book of *Job*.

"In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,

"Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

"Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

"It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image before mine eyes: silence: and I heard a voice,—

"Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" *Chap. IV.*

*Measure for Measure*, though it delights not Mr. Hunter, or Mr. Knight, or yet Coleridge, can only lose by comparison with the greatest poem ever written; and Shakespeare can well afford to find an intellectual rival in a dramatic poet whose work had reached immortal age while yet the Pyramids were young.

# ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Duke.* Of government the properties to unfold,  
Would seem in me to affect speech and discourse;  
Since I am put to know, that your own science  
Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice  
My strength can give you: Then no more remains  
But that to your sufficiency, as your worth is able,  
And let them work."

The last two lines are universally allowed to be incomprehensible as they stand in the original; and none of the many attempts to alter or explain them have seemed to satisfy even those of whose ingenuity they were the fruit. In such extremity, it would be arrogant to claim to have done that which so many able critics and editors have failed to do; but I make the passage plain for my own reading by a change in only one point and one letter; thereby correcting two trifling errors, which seem to me to be such as might easily have been made. I put a colon after 'remains,' change B for P, as Rowe did, and read,

—"your own science  
Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice  
My strength can give you: then no more remains:  
Put that to your sufficiency, as your worth is able,  
And let them work."

"Sufficiency" is obviously the plenary power delegated to *Escalus* and *Angelo*; and, if a paraphrase of this reading be needed, it is this:—Your own knowledge of the proper-

ties of government exceeds the extent of any information which I can give you : then no more remains to be considered : put that [i. e., your knowledge of government] to the ample powers delegated to you, as your individual worth of character is all sufficient, and let them work.

But there is yet another method of making the passage plain and the line musical, which does the least possible violence to the original text, and which I do not remember to have seen suggested. The mistake of 'able' for 'added' is one which might easily be made by a careless compositor in setting indistinct manuscript ; and 'able' once in the compositor's mind, 'as,' the word which destroys the rhythm of the line, would naturally suggest itself, and be inserted in the text to make an approximation to sense. It is not improbable, at least, that the passage was written,

"Then no more remains,  
But that to your sufficiency your worth is *added*,  
And let them work.'

In this reading "sufficiency" refers, of course, to the capacity of *Escalus*, which is spoken of by the *Duke* in the immediately preceding sentence ; and the emphatic word is "but," and not "that," which, a pronoun in the previous reading, becomes, in this, a conjunctive particle. This acceptance of "sufficiency," which is contended for by many commentators, whatever may be the reading, is made the more apposite, and this reading the more probable and plausible, by the phraseology of the *Duke*, who, after saying to *Escalus*, 'your knowledge of government exceeds my own,' adds, 'then [i. e., therefore] no more remains, but that to your sufficiency [i. e., your intellectual capacity and knowledge of the science of government to which I have just alluded] your worth [i. e., your moral fitness] is added, and let them work.'

*Apropos* to the subject,—*tell* it in Gath and publish it in Ascalon, that Malone, even Edmund Malone, in commenting upon this passage, has the following note :

“ ‘ And let them work,’—a figurative expression, ‘ let them ferment ’ ” !!!

This is the cap-sheaf of annotation in the post-‘ Augustan age ’ of English literature. Words fail us, and we are driven to the use of mere dumb signs of astonishment, incredulity and ridicule.

## SCENE 2.

“ *Lucio*. If the duke, with the other dukes, come not to composition with the King of Hungary, why then all the dukes fall upon the King.

“ *1 Gentleman*. Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of Hungary’s.”

The period of the action of this play has been regarded, as far as my knowledge of editions and commentaries goes, as altogether indeterminable. The editors seem to have abandoned the attempt to ascertain it in hopeless despair. The learned Mr. Collier says nothing about it, and Mr. Knight, in his note upon the costume of the play, in his Pictorial Edition, remarks :—

“ With the exception, perhaps, of the *Winter’s Tale*, no play of Shakspeare’s is so utterly destitute of any ‘ loop or hinge to hang an ’ appropriate costume upon as *Measure for Measure*. The scene is laid in Vienna, of which city there never was a duke ; and in the whole of the list of persons represented there is not one German name. Vincentio, Angelo, Escalus, Claudio, Lucio, Isabella, Juliet, Francisca, Mariana, all smack of Italy ; and it has therefore been questioned by some whether or not we should read “ *Sienna* ” for “ *Vienna*.” There does not appear, however, to be any authority for supposing the scene of action to have been



altered either theatrically or typographically, and, consequently, we must leave the artist to the indulgence of his own fancy, with the suggestion merely that the Viennese costume of the time of Shakspeare must be sought for amongst the national monuments of the reign of the Emperor Rudolph II., A. D. 1576—1612."

*Pictorial Shakspeare*, Vol. II. p. 273.

If we did not know whence Shakespeare took the plot of *Measure for Measure*, if the passage just quoted from the second scene of the play did not occur in it, and if there were no historical records of Hungary and the German Empire, I could understand this perplexity; but as the case stands, it seems that the question may be settled by investigation.

The plot of the play is taken from the *Promos and Cassandra* of George Whetstone, a tale published in his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, in 1582, and republished by Mr. Collier in his *Shakespeare's Library*. The argument or plot of this story, as given by Whetstone himself, which is printed in almost every critical edition of Shakespeare's Works, begins, "In the Cytie of *Julio* (sometimes under the dominion of *Corvinus* King of *Hungary* and *Bohemia*) there was a law," &c. The tale itself commences thus :

"At what time *Corvinus*, the scourge of the Turkes, rayned as Kinge of *Bohemia*, for to well governe the free cities of his realme, he sent divers worthy majestrates," &c.

Shakespeare, with his usual tact in adapting his plays to the understanding of his audience, changed the unknown city, *Julio*, for *Vienna*, a place, the name and importance of which was almost or quite as well known to Englishmen of that day as of this ; with the place, he also changed, of course, the prince whose delegated authority was abused. But he scrupulously retained the costume and all the traits,

incidents, and allusions which mark the period of the story on which he built his comedy; and added, besides, as we shall see, certain two or three allusions not found in Whetstone's story, as if for the very purpose of giving a local habitation and a time, as well as an air of reality to his creation. The *Duke of Vienna* in Shakespeare's comedy, is, of course, the Duke of Austria, of which province that city has been for hundreds of years the capital. *Lucio* opens the second scene of the play by saying, "If the Duke with the other Dukes come not to composition with the King of Hungary, why, then all the Dukes fall upon the King." The period of the action must then be, according to the internal evidence of the play, a time when the Duke of Austria was not King of Hungary (which he sometimes was by choice of the nation, the crown of Hungary being elective), and when Hungary was at war with Austria : \* according to the requirements of the story which furnished the plot, the action must take place at a time when there was a Corvinus, King of Hungary and also of Bohemia, and who was also a scourge of the Turks.

Now, we find that in the year 1464, the Hungarians refused to choose a king from the house of Austria, and raised to the throne Mathias Corvinus, son of Huniades, regent in the previous reign, as appears in the following passage under that year in Heiss' History of the Empire.

"Les Hongrois voyant l'embarras où étoit l'Empereur, au

\* Perhaps some of my readers would be glad to be reminded that the German Empire was not hereditary but elective ; the Emperor being chosen by the Electoral College constituted by the rulers of those states which formed the Empire. Almost every Electorate has, at some time more or less remote, furnished an occupant for the Imperial throne. Thus it happened that the King of Hungary was sometimes Emperor of Germany and Duke of Austria as well as King of Hungary ; and sometimes he was the King of Poland, sometimes the King of Bohemia. In the present instance, however, as we shall see, he was a Hungarian.

lieu de chercher un Roi dans la Maison d'Autriche, élurent en la place du défunt Prince Ladislas, Mathias Corvin, fils du brave Huniades. Ils ne le couronnerent pas alors, parce que l'Empereur retenoit toujours la couronne, dont ils avoient accoutumé de couronner leurs Rois."

*Histoire de l'Empire*, Liv. III.

But this date is incorrect according to the contemporary writer Antonius Bonfinus, who says that Mathias Corvinus was *crowned* in 1464, having been elected in 1458. He reigned until his death, which took place in 1490. During this time he was almost continually at war with the Duke of Austria, Frederick III., and with the Turks. His expeditions were generally successful against both. He usually "conquered a peace" by a very bloody victory; so that the *Gentleman* who replies to *Lucio* might well say, "Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of Hungary's." In 1476 he subdued the greater part of Austria; and in 1485 he marched to Vienna and took it. In 1478 he laid waste the country of the Turks for thirty miles, and took thirty thousand prisoners. In 1480 he is recorded to have slain thirty thousand Turks in battle, to which he added a trifle of three thousand more in 1482. But, more than this, in 1472 he invaded Poland, and conquered the Bohemians who came to the aid of his enemies; and in 1473 the provinces of Moravia and Silesia were ceded to him with the title of *King of Bohemia* for life; the provinces to return to Bohemia after his death, on the payment of 600,000 crowns, but the remainder of Bohemia to fall to him if he survived Ladislaus, then rightful king of that country.

Paulus Jovius, who in this case had no temptation to flatter or malign with his "pens of iron or gold," thus speaks of the prowess and success of Corvinus, in a passage which still further establishes the points already made:

"Sed post editum infelicem partum, Regina contentioni finem  
9

fecit honestis conditionibus, legitimeque demum antiquo Regum diademate apud Albam coronatus est; sic ut regnavit supra annos triginta sex, occupatus semper novo bello, quum perpetuis, & invictis armis undique sibi amplissimam laudem & gloriam parandam existimaret. Non sustinere ardentis Ducis vim Poloni. qui arma Hungaris inferre ausi fuerant. Hæc eadem Germanorum robora perfregit, quum Austriæ Viennam Frederico Cæsari adimeret. Valachorum exercitum ancipiti prælio profligavit, quo ipse sagitta vulneratus, sed planè victor discessit. Binis quoque præliis Turcarum ab Illyrici limite irrumpentium audaciam ita contudit atque repressit, ut Mahometes eorum imperator, omnium propè gentium victor, successorque ejus filius Bajazetes, æquissimis legibus pacem petierint. Gessit adversus Slesisitas ad Vratislaviam urbem acre bellum, tanta utique felicitate, ut in toto Hungarici regni limite devictarum ab se gentium summæ gloriæ, trophæa spectarentur."

*Elogia Virorum Illustrum. Lib. III.*

Here, then, we have all our conditions fulfilled. A Corvinus, King of Hungary and Bohemia, at war with the Duke of Austria, and a scourge of the Turks. The period of the play is evidently between 1473, when he received the title of King of Bohemia, or rather, 1476, when he overran the greater part of Austria, and 1490, when he died. The time of the action of few of Shakespeare's non-historical plays can be so definitely determined. But, as he marched on Vienna in 1485, we are able to determine almost the very year required; and thus the period of this play, instead of being altogether indeterminable, is fixed with more accuracy than that of any other which has not a strictly historical subject.

Frederick III. was Emperor of Germany as well as Duke of Austria; but that it was the custom of the Emperors to combine, as *Lucio* says, "with the other Dukes," and for "all the Dukes to fall upon the King" of Hungary, is evident from the following passage from Heiss, who records

in it exactly such a proceeding on the part of one of the earlier Emperors, Henry I., who was Duke of Saxony :

“ Au commencement de son regne, il ne pensa qu'à *reconcilier en Allemagne les Princes, Comtes et Seigneurs, les uns avec les autres*, pour établir par tout une parfaite union, comme étant l'unique fondement de la prospérité, et de la gloire des Allemands. Il y réussit si bien, et gagna de telle sorte leur amitié, que par leur assistance, *tous concoururent à lui faire remporter une signalée victoire sur les Hongrois*, qui, selon leur coûtume, étoient venus faire une irruption en Allemagne avec une puissante armée.”

*Histoire de l'Empire*, Liv. II.

It is also noteworthy that the wretch *Barnardine* is spoken of as “ a Bohemian born, but here [in Vienna] nursed up and bred ; ” \* and that the *Duke* tells *Friar Thomas*, that *Angelo* supposes him “ travell'd to Poland,” † a journey, not uncommon with the Dukes of Austria, who continually had need of the aid of the Poles against the Hungarians. § Thus carefully and minutely has Shakespeare

\* Act IV. Sc. 2.

† Act I. Sc. 4.

§ My authorities for these historical facts are the following :

Antonii Bonfinii rerum Hungaricum Decades quartuor et dimidia.  
Fol. Basle : 1543.

Pauli Jovii Novocomensis Elogia Virorum bellica virtute illustrium.  
Fol. Basil. : 1575.

Isaacson's Saturnii Ephemerides, sive Tabula Historica Chronologica : Fol. London : 1633.

Histoire de l'Empire, &c, par le Sieur Heiss. 5 vols., 8vo. Paris : 1711.

The same information may doubtless be obtained in other historical works more in the ordinary course of reading ; but I was unable to find in any others in my own possession or easily accessible to me, the events of the reigns of the earlier Kings of Hungary and Emperors of Austria, recorded with sufficient particularity for the purposes of this investigation. The works of Pray and Bell were not within my reach, and Coxe's History of the House of Austria is not an exception to the foregoing remark ; although its accounts of the expeditions of Corvinus against Frederic and the Turks are, of course, perfectly consistent with the authorities to which I have referred. Isaacson's book, my copy of which, however, is the only

indicated the place and the period of this drama. And yet we are told that "it has been questioned by some whether or not we should read Sienna for Vienna!" Truly, it seems as if editors, critics, and commentators had read this play with eyes half open, as well as with heads and hearts top full of prejudice.

It may interest some of the readers of this volume to know that this Corvinus, King of Hungary, whose peace was so dreaded by the citizens of Vienna, and who was such a scourge to the Turks, was a distinguished patron of literature and the arts. After taking Vienna in 1485, he retired to Buda, and there founded a noble library, consisting chiefly of manuscripts of the Greek and Latin poets and historians, and containing about thirty thousand volumes, which were superbly bound in brocade protected with bosses and clasps of gold or silver. The books were disposed in vaulted galleries in which were fountains of marble and silver. The Turks revenged themselves upon him, after his death, by utterly frustrating his care for the literary wants of posterity. When Solyman the Magnificent took Buda by storm in 1526, the library of Corvinus formed no inconsiderable part of the plunder of the city: the Turkish soldiers tore the covers from the volumes which they adorned and protected, for the sake of the gold and silver and precious stones with which they were enriched. This library and its sad fate are described with some particularity by Mr. Dibdin, in his *Bibliographical Decameron*. The letters of Corvinus were thought worthy of publication, and were issued at Cassovia in Hungary, in 2 vols. 8vo., in 1744.

one which I ever saw, I commend to the notice of the student, as at once the most particular and most clearly arranged chronological work in a tabular form which has fallen under my observation. There are discrepancies of a year or two between these authors themselves, and also between them and some more modern authorities, as to dates; but they do not affect the merits of this question in the least.

SCENE 5.

*Isab.* And have you nuns no farther privileges?

*Fran.* Are not these large enough?

*Isab.* Yes, truly: I speak not as desiring more;  
But rather wishing a more strict restraint  
Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clara."

Shakespeare's women have been so much praised, and it is so safe and so easy to praise them, that it may be confidently assumed that they who have studied those wonderful creations most lovingly and closely, are they who are generally repelled by the promiscuous praise bestowed upon them; for it is but too often the vague and unmeaning panegyric of the thoughtless and indiscriminating, who seek to acquire a reputation for taste by compliance with custom. Those who truly know Shakespeare's women, who regard them with instinctive devotion and intelligent admiration, turn away with disappointment or distaste from this adulation, to the loving contemplation of its object; and shut their ears to the always inadequate and often belittling praise of the women, to bend their mind's eye upon the women themselves, who never disappoint, and never leave the cravings of man's heart unsatisfied, when he who called them into being meant that they should fill it. It is, indeed, one of the marvels of Shakespeare's genius, that, living in the age in which he lived, born and bred as he was, having such examples before him as the women of the dramas written by his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, and writing for a stage upon which women never appeared, he created the most real-seeming, the most captivating and truly feminine women in the whole range of imaginative composition. Princesses or peasant girls, Duchesses or dairy maids, wise or foolish, chaste or wanton, they are always womanly; or, in those few cases in which the poet did not intend that they should fill the high

requirements of that term, in some one of its beautiful phases, their failings and their faults are womanish, at least.

'The sex' is fully represented in Shakespeare's pages. He has shown us woman in all her aspects: the true-hearted and the fickle, the pure and the impure, the lovely and the loathly, all figure on his canvas; but however repulsive, as however enchanting they may be, their very faults as well as their virtues are feminine. No mannish, even no sexless woman affronts us in his view of womankind. The sweet and shrinking *Perdita* is not more purely feminine than her heroic mother *Hermione*, who, in her noble traits and large outlines, leaves in our memories a figure sad but grand, and like the statue that she feigned to be. And *Cleopatra*,—wily, almost wise; abandoned to her passions; reviling the memory of one paramour, the more to glorify her love for his successor; and deserting even him in his danger, to return again to him in his extremity,—yet charms us; for, erring as she is, she errs like a woman; and the same inexplicable spell of mental sex which chains our regards to her, in spite of all her falsehood and her crimes, wins us to look with gracious eyes upon her kind-hearted, brainless, tittering handmaid *Charmian*.

Among the charms with which Shakespeare has endowed his women of the higher types, a subduing tenderness of heart and an innate purity of soul are eminent. The lovely, lovable, and loving creatures seem to be devoted and self-sacrificing from an impulse of their natures, to stifle which would be to end their hopes of happiness. They are chaste, not because they are passionless, or because they have deliberately weighed the propriety of two courses of conduct and decided for the better; but because, being passionful, they are also single-eyed and true-hearted, and revolt instinctively from the thought of wanton desecration of their spotless natures. Such are *Miranda*, *Julia*, *Portia*, *Rosalind*,



*Viola, Perdita, Juliet, Desdemona*, and, above all, *Imogen*; but such is not *Isabella*; and it is in her that this play furnishes us its second strongly marked type of character, which, without her, would have been unrepresented on Shakespeare's stage.

The poet has given us one marvellously faithful, and yet ideal portrait of the woman sometimes, and, heaven be thanked, but rarely, seen, who is compounded solely of intellect and a sense of propriety. This woman makes piety her employment, and chastity her profession. She is deliberately sanctified, and energetically virtuous. She is not content with yielding to the influences and practising the precepts of religion, she must openly mortify herself before it. She is not satisfied with living chastely in thought and deed, as maid or matron, she must continually fortify herself in a purity which, having reasoned herself into, she fears that she might be reasoned out of, and lay deliberate plans to preserve a continence which, in most cases, she need apprehend no temptation to relax. She is strong-minded, and often enough strong-bodied; and would have stood till doomsday beside the ruined tower, and listened amid the lingering light to the lay which won Coleridge's *Genevieve*, and have gone away unthrilled by impulses of soul and sense, and undisturbed by pity. She is a pietist in her religion, a pedant in her talk, a prude in her notions, and a prig in her conduct. This is the sort of woman which alone could furnish a proper companion portrait to *Angelo*; and Shakespeare has given her to us in *Isabella*,—one of the most truthful and carefully finished of his female characters; and yet to the thoughtful observation of a manly man, one of the most repulsive.

The Supplementary Essay to this play in Mr. Knight's Edition of the Works of Shakespeare states that Mrs. Lennox calls *Isabella* "a vixen," and "a prude," but that Mrs.

Jameson defends and eulogizes the character. I have yet to read thoroughly the writings of any of Shakespeare's female commentators ; but what little I know of Mrs. Lennox's work leads me to dread rather than seek her as an ally ; while I fear that Mrs. Jameson might lead me to admire, unconvinced, and approve against my better judgment. Therefore I have postponed reading the views of either of these ladies upon the character of *Isabella* until after I have recorded my own.

Our first view of *Isabella* shows her to us on a volunteer foray against impropriety. A novice, about to enter a convent, she has just heard the rules of the order from one of her future sisters. One would think that the rules of any convent would have seemed strict enough to a young woman in the flush of youth ; and that in this one, where, as we learn in this Scene, a nun could not speak to a man "but in the presence of the prioress," or if she spoke, must be concealed, *Isabella* could be proper to her heart's content. But no ; she only hears the laws which are to shut her out from intercourse with men and with the world, to express her wish for "a more strict restraint upon the sisterhood." Her porcupine purity is neither the negative virtue resulting from ignorance and sometimes miscalled innocence, nor the instinct of a chaste consciousness, nor the unconscious fruit of religious influence. She has solemnly made up her mind to be chaste : she has determined to be *tres forte sur la sagesse* : that is to be her speciality : she has announced it ; and the whole town knows it. It is amusing to see the evidence of this in the answer of the *Provost* to *Angelo*, when the latter first hears of her, on the second occasion on which she is spoken of in the play. *Angelo*, hearing her announced as "the sister of the man condemned," asks if *Claudio* has a sister. The *Provost* replies, "Ay, my good lord ;" and adds,—not that she

is beautiful, not that she is gentle or stately, not that she is beloved, not that she is benevolent, not even that she is virtuous; but that she is "*very* virtuous."

"*Angelo.*

Hath he a sister?

*Provost.* Ay, my good lord; a *very* virtuous maid."

*Act. II. Sc. 2.*

And to put beyond all question the deliberate thoroughness with which *Isabella* has given her mind to this matter,—after her first formal introduction of her business, she herself tells us the position which she has taken upon the subject.

"*Isab.* There is a vice, that most I do abhor,  
And most desire should meet the blow of justice;  
For which I would not plead, but that I must;  
For which I must not plead, but that I am  
At war, 'twixt will, and will not."

*Act. II. Sc. 2.*

It is a vice that she *most* abhors, that she *most* desires should meet the blow of justice. She has thought over the category of vices, and has determined that this is to be her particular horror. Would *Viola* have done that? would *Portia*? would *Imogen*? Pure hearted, gentle creatures,—no. They would have revolted from the unmaidenly syllogisms which must have preceded such a conclusion, as they would have shrunk from infamy; and yet they were no prudes; and when there was necessity, called things by their right names.

We seek in vain for any evidence that *Isabella's* formidable chastity and ascetic religion were the fruits of, or even accompanied by, any grace of soul or tenderness of heart. She has a dreadfully rectangular nature, is an accomplished and not very scrupulous dialectician, and thinks it proper to be benevolent only when she has the law on

her side. She is utterly without impulse,—that charming trait of woman, which if it expose her to some perils, protects her from more and greater, and which prompts and gives efficiency as well as beauty alike to all her gentle deeds of homely kindness and her nobler acts of self-devotion. *Isabella*, on the contrary, does every thing “by the card.” She goes to *Angelo* to intercede for her brother,—she could not have done less,—and begins by making the immodest and utterly needless, and therefore unkind and injurious confession, that her brother has been guilty of the vice which she most desires should meet the blow of justice. She briefly and coldly states her case ; and after receiving only a quasi denial of her proposition, she instantly retires ; not neglecting the opportunity, however, to eulogize the law which on the morrow will leave her brotherless.

“*Isab.* I have a brother is condemn’d to die :

I do beseech you, let it be his fault,

And not my brother.

*Prov.* Heaven give thee moving graces !

*Ang.* Condemn the fault, and not the actor of it !

Why, every fault’s condemn’d, ere it be done :

Mine were the very cipher of a function,

To fine the faults, whose fine stands in record,

And let go by the actor.

*Isab.* O just, but severe law !

I had a brother then.—Heaven keep your honour ! [*Retiring.*”

*Act II. Sc. 2.*

A sister might have neglected to volunteer a panegyric of that particular statute at that particular time, and yet have been none the less pure-minded. No wonder that *Lucio* tells her,

“if you should need a pin,

You could not with more tame a tongue desire it.”

But it is very questionable whether *Isabella* was womanish enough to need a pin; she probably used buttons,—or would have done so had she lived now-a-days. It may be uncharitable, perhaps, to accuse her of having an eye to the reversion of the points with which *Claudio* tied his doublet and hose; but her indifference to his death looks very like it.

But, urged on by *Lucio*, she remains, and commences—to plead with *Angelo*? to touch his heart by womanly graces? to turn against his manhood all the nameless, irresistible power of female prayers and tears? No: she stops to reason with him, to have a little bout at dialectics,—the subject being the pardon of her brother. She tells the deputy that he

“might pardon him,  
And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.”

And when he says, that, what he will not, that he cannot do, she replies,

‘But you might do’t and do the world no wrong,  
If so your heart were touch’d with that remorse  
As mine is to him.”

Could she be more deliberate, if she were proving that the angles of a right-angled triangle are equal to two right angles? And thus she goes on, disputing with *Angelo* as to how he would feel if he were *Claudio*, and what she would do if she were *Angelo*; giving him her ideas about authority, justice, and the unjust influence which social position exerts upon our judgment of man’s conduct: she almost gets into a discussion of “fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute.” She does it well, exceedingly well; and with a self-possession, clearness of perception, and command

of language, which under the circumstances are equally astonishing, unfeminine, and unlovely. But not a prayer, not an entreaty, not an utterance of woeful apprehension, until she hears that *Claudio* is to be beheaded on the next day ; and then she utters an ejaculation, not of grief, but of apprehension for the safety of his soul :—very proper, and highly becoming in one about to become a professed *religieuse* ; but had her woman's and her sister's feelings—such as she had—been uppermost, she would have appeared the better, and have been none the worse. But as to her sorrow, it is remarkable that she does not shed a tear, or once use those woman's weapons, until she hears from the *Duke* of the death of *Claudio* ; and then she weeps, rather, it would seem, from spite than grief. The *Duke* (Act IV. Sc. 3) tells her that *Claudio's* "head is off and sent to *Angelo*." Is she crushed by the unexpected blow ? Does she grieve ? Is her spirit subdued by her bereavement, and the fate of her brother ? No : her first thought is of a vixen's vengeance upon the adversary who has overreached her. She exclaims,

"O, I will to him and *pluck out his eyes* !"

After this, as we learn from the remarks of the *Duke* and *Lucio*, she weeps. But it is note-worthy that her tears are not spoken of in very complimentary terms even by the *Duke*. He does not call them 'holy drops,' or any thing of the kind, but "fretting waters ;" and the only consolations which he deems at all likely to be efficacious with this very holy and "very virtuous" maid, are promises of revenge, and gratified ambition.

"If you can, pace your wisdom  
In that good path that I would wish it go ;  
And you shall have your bosom on this wretch,  
*Grace of the duke, revenges to your heart,*  
*And general honor.*"

A second interview with *Angelo* (Act II. Sc. 4) is almost a repetition of the first. He tells her that her brother cannot live ; and her brief, calm, acquiescent reply is,

"Even so,—Heaven keep your honor."

[Retiring.]

*Angelo*, to obtain the opportunity for his base proposal, is obliged to provoke her into an attempt to change his determination ; and then she goes at it like the senior wrangler of some future female college. To quote the characteristic parts of this Scene would be to give the whole of it. There are one or two very decided expressions of feeling, in reply to the attack made upon that particular virtue which she has made her hobby ; but not one tender word to show that she is moved to sorrow or compassion for her brother, or that she has a woman's heart beneath her marble bosom. Her exceeding adroitness in special pleading becomes positively amusing when she turns the tables upon *Angelo*, who asks her,

"Might there not be a charity in sin,  
To save this brother's life?"

Not disconcerted for an instant, she replies,

"Please *you* to do't,  
I'll take it as a peril to my soul,  
It is no sin at all, but charity."

O women, who long to let the light of your intellect shine before men, see how repulsive this creature is to men, in spite of her beauty and her intellect, as she stands victoriously quibbling with a judge, while she cannot plead for or excuse her erring brother ! How men would love and reverence her if, though utterly unable to reply to *Angelo*, she had

besieged him with the pathetic eloquence of woman's tenderness and woman's grief! But as it is, she is merely a clever talker and "very virtuous;" and clever talkers, men can find by hundreds among themselves; while that virtue upon which *Isabella* so prided herself, they are accustomed to regard as a quiet and conservative, and not a militant and progressive quality, and one which exists in absolute perfection when in the positive degree. They do not believe in the *crescendo*—virtuous, quite virtuous, very virtuous, more than in the *diminuendo*—virtuous, pretty virtuous, almost virtuous.

To return to our Scene.—It is more chilling than a North West Passage to hear this beautiful woman, whose brother's life hangs on her tongue, admitting with arid curtness the positions which her adversary takes as the basis of his argument.

"*Ang.* But mark me;  
To be received plain, I'll speak more gross;  
Your brother is to die.  
*Isab.* So.  
*Ang.* And his offence is so, as it appears  
Accountant to the law upon that pain.  
*Isab.* True.  
*Ang.* Admit no other way to save his life," &c.

Our sympathy is with her cause, but not with her; and when, thinking that she has *Angelo* on the hip, she who could not entreat, assumes the bully, and thus threatens him:

"*Isab.* Ha! little honor to be much believed,  
And most pernicious purpose!—seeming, seeming!—  
I will proclaim thee, *Angelo*; look for't;  
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,  
Or, with an outstretch'd throat, I'll tell the world  
Aloud, what man thou art."



then, with all our pity for *Claudio* and our detestation of *Angelo*, we cannot but feel a sort of satisfaction that the latter is not so entirely in the clutches of this beautiful she *Rhadamanthus*, and that the pardon of *Claudio* is not obtained exactly in that way. *Claudio* himself appreciates exactly the strong points of his sister's character ; for, in the first sentence of the play which apprises us of her existence, he tells *Lucio*,

"She hath prosperous art  
When she will *play with reason and discourse*,  
And well she can persuade."

*Act I. Sc. 2.*

And it is quite remarkable that the "prone and speechless dialect, such as moves men," of which he speaks, is not in her, but, be it noticed, "in *her youth*." *Angelo*, too, bears evidence to the fact that she is a very intellectual woman, in fact quite 'an intelligence.' She does not touch him by her devotion, or her winning ways, or the pathos of her appeals for her brother's life ; but admiring at once her person and a sharp specimen of the *argumentum ad hominem* with which she favors him, and quibbling after the fashion of Shakespeare's day, he says, aside,

"She speaks, and 'tis  
*Such sense*, that my sense breeds with it."

*Act II. Sc. 2.*

*Isabella's* frigidity with *Angelo* is unredeemed by any tenderness to her brother. It does not melt even in the furnace of his affliction. Her first announcement of his fate is cold and merciless enough.

"Lord *Angelo*, having affairs to heaven,  
Intends you for his swift ambassador,  
Where you shall be an everlasting leiger :

Therefore your best appointment make with speed;  
To-morrow you set on."

*Act III. Sc. 1.*

But when,—after some discussion, in which she utters several fine things about what *Claudio* ought to do, and what she would do under other circumstances, she again directs him to prepare for execution,—with an impassibility absolutely frightful, this sheriff in petticoats says to her brother,

"Be ready, Claudio, for your death to-morrow."

Sheriff! There wasn't a headsman in Austria who could have done it with a more professional and businesslike air.

*Claudio*, stunned by this cold-blooded barbarity, and left without consolation in his extremity, becomes cowardly, and shrinks from death even at the expense of his sister's chastity. That she remains firm, would be to her honor, were not the spirit in which she does it so pitiless, so utterly uncompassionate, the feeling which she expresses so inhuman, not to say so unwomanly, and the language which she uses so obdurate and so savage. Hear the gentle votaress of Saint Clare, the "very virtuous maid!"—

*Isab.* O, you beast!  
O, faithless coward! O, dishonest wretch!  
Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice!  
\* \* \* Take my defiance:  
Die; perish! might but my bending down  
Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed:  
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,  
No word to save thee."

Is this the spirit of Christ's religion? is it this to be "a very virtuous maid?" Do genuine propriety of life, and innate purity of soul necessitate such treatment of a brother, weak, erring, cowardly, and selfishly sinful though he be?

What a terrible and yet what a truthful satire is written in this character of *Isabella* !

But she caps the climax of her indifference and her deference to routine duty when the *Duke*, entering at this moment, in his holy character and habit, asks her, as she is about retiring precipitately, to wait,—promising that it shall be for her benefit. Does she catch at a chance of comfort for poor *Claudio* ? Hear her prompt reply :

“I have no superfluous leisure: my stay must be stolen out of other affairs; but I will attend you a while.”

She has no leisure. She is a woman of business ; and her stay must be stolen out of other affairs. She has wasted as much time upon her brother as she has to spare—nevertheless, she has done or offered to do nothing to prepare him for his death,—and now she is impatient to be off to her duties at the convent, and leave him to his fate. Unless her apologist, Mrs. Jameson, is even a better special pleader than she is herself, her case seems hopeless ; for she is here judged out of her own mouth, and those of her brother and her admirer.

*Lucio* is incidentally made a quasi eulogist of *Isabella*, by the erroneous punctuation of some editions, and by Mr. Knight specifically, who says of her that, “in the eyes of the habitual profligate with whom she comes in contact, she is,

‘a thing ensky’d and sainted.’”

But *Lucio* does not say so. He does say,—according to the original, which Mr. Collier has thus almost exactly followed in his excellent edition of the *genuine* works of Shakespeare (8 vols. 8vo. 1844)—

“’Tis true. I would not, though ’t is my familiar sin  
With maids to seem the lapwing, and to jest,

Tongue far from heart, play with all virgins so:  
 I hold you as a thing ensky'd, and sainted  
 By your renouncement, an immortal spirit,  
 And to be talk'd with in sincerity,  
 As with a saint."

*Act I. Sc. 5.*

He holds her as ensky'd and sainted *by her renouncement*. There is no warrant even in the almost utterly worthless punctuation of the first folio for any other construction of the passage; and even if there were, the points in such a carelessly printed volume are not to be set for one minute against the obvious or even the implied sense of its words. As Malone remarks, in a comment directed to entirely another point in the passage, *Lucio* says to *Isabella*, "I consider you, *in consequence of your having renounced the world*, as an immortal spirit, as one to whom I ought to speak with as much sincerity as if I were addressing a saint." This is an expression entirely in accordance with the veneration with which recluses were regarded in the Middle Ages, by even the worst of men; while to make *Lucio* utter such a sentiment, simply from a knowledge of *Isabella's* character, is to entirely falsify his own, the chief element of which is an utter want of reverence for any thing. Besides, the punctuation necessary to Mr. Knight's use of the line, not only breaks the natural sequence of the thought, but rudely disturbs the flow of the verse. It makes three successive lines close each with a completed sense and a falling inflection; than which nothing could be more stiff, disjointed, unmusical, un-Shakesperian; as will be evident upon a perusal of the passage so punctuated:—

"to jest  
 Tongue far from heart,—play with all virgins so:  
 I hold you as a thing ensky'd and sainted;  
 By your renouncement an immortal spirit;  
 And to be talked with," &c.

This will never do. But the last and the insuperable objection to this reading of the passage is, that, on *Lucio's* own evidence, he could not hold her "ensky'd and sainted" except as a nun; for he knew nothing else of her, and had not even seen her before the occasion on which he makes this remark within two minutes of the commencement of their interview. As he enters the convent, she presents herself to him, and he asks her, if she can procure him an interview with herself:

*Lucio.* "Hail, virgin, if you be,—as those cheek-roses  
Proclaim you are no less! Can you so stead me  
As bring me to the sight of Isabella,  
A novice of this place, and the fair sister  
To her unhappy brother Claudio!  
*Isab.* Why her unhappy brother! let me ask;  
The rather, for I now must make you know  
I am that Isabella, and his sister."

*Act I. Sc. 5.*

When he discovers who she is, he regards her merely as *Claudio's* sister, and one devoted to a religious life: any other of the sisterhood or novices would have been equally ensky'd and sainted, in his eyes. *Isabella* too adds her own testimony, needless though it is, in confirmation of this interpretation of the passage. In reply to this very speech, in which *Lucio* calls her a saint, she says,

"You do blaspheme the good in mocking me,"

showing plainly that she accepted, nay, commanded, his reverence as but a formal and becoming tribute to the holy calling which she was just about to take upon herself.

As if to show by contrast the unloveliness of *Isabella's* character, Shakespeare has given us in *Mariana* one of the most lovable and womanly of his feminine creations. We see little of her: indeed, she does not appear until the

fourth Act ; in the first scene of which she says very little, in the last scene but eight words, and in the fifth Act not a great deal. But the few touches of the master's hand make a charming picture. Every word she utters shows that she is exactly *Isabella's* opposite. Turn to the fifth Act, and hear *her* plead,—plead for the man whom she has loved through lonely years of wrong, the man whose life is justly forfeit for taking, as she thinks, the life of another, in a course of crime which involved a sin against her love. Timid and shrinking before, she does not now wait to be encouraged in her suit. She is instant and importunate. She does not reason or quibble with the *Duke* ; she begs, she implores, she kneels. She even drags down that beautiful graven image, *Isabella*, upon her knees, by her impetuous prayers :

'O my good lord!—Sweet Isabel take my part:  
Lend me your knees; and all my life to come  
I'll lend you all my life to do your service."

Again :

" Isabel,  
Sweet Isabel, do yet but kneel by me;  
Hold up your hands, say nothing, I'll speak all.  
They say, best men are moulded out of faults ;  
And for the most, become much more the better  
For being a little bad : so may my husband.  
O, Isabel ! will you not lend a knee !"

No dialectics, no right-angled triangles here. This is a woman, pleading like a woman. And does not her very prayer for *Angelo* make his crime seem more detestable as well as her more lovable ? How the fulness of her heart wells up from her lips ! These few words of self-devotion and of impulse throw a halo around her, whose tender glow makes the glittering light of *Isabella's* intellect seem as false and as chilly as that reflected from an icicle.

There is opportunity enough for *Mariana* to inveigh against unchastity ; but she says not one word. And yet who doubts her ? What man would not as soon trust the honor of his name with her as with *Isabella*,—aye, sooner ! Contrast *Isabella's* virtue with that of Shakespeare's noblest woman,—*Imogen*. Compare the cold, reasoning continence of the one, with the immaculate and instinctive purity of the other's passionate nature. *Isabella*, as if dreading a riot in her blood, seeks the protection of laws and sentinels and bolts and bars, and before she has tried them, begs to have them doubled ; when, in truth, the suit of the young god of Day himself would fail to stir the gelid lymph that loiters through her veins. *Imogen*, who could give her love unasked to one below her station, yet lose no dignity as princess, or as woman, whose nature was as fond as *Desdemona's* and as passionate as *Juliet's*, finds in her own inherent but unobtruded modesty a watchful sentinel and a triple wall of defence against a libertine's attack.

Such is Shakespeare's marvellously truthful portraiture of a type which, sad to say, does exist among womankind. —Women whose existence is bound up in a love of propriety, a pride of intellect, and an ostentatious submission to the dictates of an austere religion. Perhaps they should be pitied rather than condemned ; but it would tax any power, short of omnipotence, to make them loved. Coleridge says, in a brief paragraph of his *Table Talk*, devoted to this play : "*Isabella* herself contrives to be unamiable." The remark is severe ; for it needlessly attributes a bad motive. *Isabella* needed no contrivance to such an end : her unamiability, like the reading and writing spoken of by *Dogberry*, "comes by nature."

*Isabella* is a woman with too much brain or too little heart. A woman cannot have too fine an intellect, or one too large, if, only, her affections be finer and larger ; but

the moment that she shows an excess of the first, she becomes unfeminine, repulsive, monstrous. Shakespeare has given us an ideal of every type of man and womankind ; and he could not pass by this. Its unloveliness was not to deter him from the task ; though the effect of that is somewhat modified by the personal beauty of his subject ; which, too, was necessary to the dramatic movement of the play. But he does not always set up his greatest creations as models for our imitation. He drew an *Iago* and an *Angelo* among men ; among women, why should he withhold his hand from a *Lady Macbeth* and an *Isabella* ?

Coleridge, in the little paragraph just mentioned, complains that, " our feelings of justice are grossly wounded at *Angelo's* escape." No, no ! indeed, no ! It is for *Mariana's* sake that *Angelo* is pardoned. What is the injustice of his pardon to the justice of giving her her husband ? Her suffering, her long and lonely sorrows, are the condition of the happy termination of the play ; and shall she not have her reward ? Yes, truly. Tears like hers would wash away the blood on the stern statute books of Draco.

Hallam finds fault with the *Duke's* hinted intention of marrying *Isabella* ; and calls it " one of Shakespeare's hasty half thoughts." One of Shakespeare's hasty half thoughts ! Pray, how many such has he left us ? With all deference to the Historian of the Literature of Europe, this was exactly the best disposition which could have been made of *Isabella*. The *Duke*, a well-meaning, undecided, feeble-minded, contemplative man, needed somebody to act for him and govern him ; she, after having listened solemnly to his arguments, probably found him guilty—not of love, that would have been unpardonable—but of preference for a female, under extenuating circumstances, and—married him. He needed a ' gray mare ;' and Shakespeare, with his unerring perception of the eternal fitness of things, gave him *Isabella*.



ACT II. SCENE 2.

*Isab.* If he had been as you, and you as he,  
You would have slipped like him; but he, like you,  
Would not have been so stern."

The last comma should not exist in the last clause of this sentence. As it stands above, and is always printed, it means that *Claudio* would be like *Angelo*, and yet not so stern; for "like you" is made parenthetical. But "like" is evidently used here with the force of 'as'; and *Isabella* means to say that, if their situations had been changed, *Claudio* would not have been so stern as *Angelo*. Read,—

"but he, like you  
Would not have been so stern."

SCENE 3.

*Duke.* 'Tis meet so, daughter; but least you do repent,  
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame;  
Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not heaven,  
Showing we would not spare heaven, as we love it,  
But as we stand in fear."

Mr. Collier's MS. corrector makes the fourth line,

"Showing we would not *serve* heaven," &c.

This appears to be required by the context, and to be a permissible correction of a probable misprint. Still, "spare" is defended in *Blackwood's Magazine*, on the ground that to *spare* heaven is to refrain from sin, while to *serve* heaven is to do good actively. The plea for the old reading has the merit of some subtle ingenuity, but hardly more.

"*Juliet*. Must die to-morrow! O, injurious love,  
That respites me a life, whose very comfort  
Is still a dying misery."

An obvious and easy misprint in the original makes utter nonsense of this passage. How does *Juliet's* injurious love for *Claudio* respite her a life? It was the *law* which took his life and respited hers, although, as she confesses, the offence "was mutually committed," and,—as the *Duke* decides, with her assent,—although her sin was, therefore, "of heavier kind than his." It was this *law* that she calls "injurious." Read,

"Must die to-morrow! O injurious *law*,  
That respites me a life," &c.

This correction was made by Sir Thomas Hanmer; and yet, strange to say, "love" has been retained by all more modern editors; although it does not afford even the least gleam of sense. Johnson, and some with him, have supposed that *Juliet* attributes to her love the preservation of her life, because "her execution was respited on account of her pregnancy, the effects of her love." But she was not under sentence of death. The law did not touch *her* life. As the story on which the play is founded tells us, the law in question decreed that the man who broke it "should lose his head, and the woman offender should ever after be infamously noted, by the wearing of some disguised apparel:"—perhaps something like the Scarlet Letter which Hawthorne's pen has made to glow upon the bosom of that figure whose haughty loveliness lives for ever in our memories. The love of *Juliet* could have no influence in securing her exemption from death; and there was no need that it should. The law secured her that; and because the *same* law took *Claudio* from her she calls it an "injurious law."

## SCENE 4.

"*Angelo*. ——— heaven hath my empty words  
 Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,  
 Anchors on Isabel: heaven in my mouth  
 As if I did but chew his name," &c.

For "heaven" in this speech we should evidently read *God*. That the text was thus, as Shakespeare wrote it, is plainly shown by the last line,

'As if I did but chew *his* name,'

that is, *God's* name. The change was made by the publishers of the first folio, in conformity with the statute of James I. before alluded to ; but they neglected to make a corresponding change in the pronoun.

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"*Ang.* Admit no other way to save his life,  
 (As I subscribe not that, nor any other,  
 But in the loss of question) that you, his sister,  
 Finding yourself desir'd of such a person,  
 Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,  
 Could fetch your brother from the manacles  
 Of the all-binding law ; and that there were  
 No earthly mean to save him, but that either  
 You must lay down the treasures of your body  
 To this suppos'd, or else to let him suffer,  
 What would you do !"

The clause in parentheses in this long sentence is exceedingly difficult ; in fact, absolutely incomprehensible. What does *Angelo* mean by saying that he could not subscribe to any way to save *Claudio's* life "but in the loss of question"? In this construction it seems to me that these words are meaningless, and the whole sentence devoid of sense. Besides, as the speech at present stands, *Angelo* does not even say what he means, irrespective of this phrase, which is, evidently,

this: 'Admit no other way to save your brother's life, but that you, being desired by such and such a person, yield to him,—what would you do? I do not say that this or any other way will save his life, but put the case hypothetically;'—the *caveat* being put in parentheses, in the first part of the speech. But as the text now stands, omitting the words within the parentheses, *Angelo* says, "Admit no other way to save his life ( ) that you his sister, finding yourself desir'd," etc.:—the 'but,' the word of exception, the very key of the sentence, is wanting; for it is shut out of the construction by the interposition of the parentheses. This difficulty is added to the obscurity of the parenthetic part. The trouble arises from the connection of "but in the loss of question" with "As I subscribe, &c." Shift the parenthesis, and correct one very easy misprint, and the sentence is plain.—Thus:

"Admit no other way to save his life  
 (As I subscribe not that nor any other)  
 But, in the case of question, that you his sister,  
 Finding yourself desir'd of such a person,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 What would you do?"

Mr. Singer (as I find by a paragraph in *Blackwood's Magazine* Aug. 1853, p. 190, which sustains him) supposes that he gets rid of the difficulty by considering "the loss of question" to mean, 'the looseness of conversation.' But even if this very violent distortion of the phrase be admitted, the great difficulty, the separation of "but" from "that" in the third line, is not obviated; and if regard be had to this main consideration, Mr. Singer's suggestion falls to the ground. For if we substitute the one phrase for the other, we find that we cannot say,

"Admit no other way to save his life,  
 (As I subscribe not that nor any other)

But, in the looseness of conversation, that you, his sister,  
Finding yourself desir'd, &c."

The fact is, that nearly the whole of this speech is one huge parenthesis encircling other gradually diminishing parentheses. This appears, briefly, thus. The essentials, the parts not parenthetical, are only the first and last lines,—it being remembered that *Angelo* has previously made known his purpose.

"Admit no other way to save his life  
\* \* \* \* \*  
What would you do?"

To make his meaning unmistakable, however, he states plainly, but parenthetically, the way to save his life; and the sentence becomes,

"Admit no other way to save his life,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
But \* \* \* that you, his sister,  
Finding yourself desir'd of such a person, &c.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
What would you do?"

But it becomes him to be wary with a woman like *Isabella*, and to let her know, as they are arguing the matter, that he puts this case but for the sake of question, *i. e.* argument; and so the third line becomes,

"But (in the case of question) that you his sister," &c.

Yet again, it suits his purpose to say to her that he not only puts such a case merely for the sake of argument, but that he wishes to state explicitly that, even if it should actually occur, he cannot subscribe to its success, or to that of any other supposable case; and so the second line makes

its appearance, and the speech becomes, according to modern punctuation,

"Admit no other way to save his life,  
 (As I subscribe not that, nor any other)  
 But,—in the case of question,—that you, his sister  
 Finding yourself desir'd, &c. \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 What would you do!"

That *Angelo* and *Isabella* are arguing the case, is evident, from his taking his positions in the two immediately preceding speeches, and her brief admissions of their correctness. "So," she says, and "True."

These remarks, it should be remembered, are not by way of argument; but for the purpose of analyzing a very interesting passage. The changes—a mere correction of the punctuation in the most carelessly pointed book ever printed, and the rectification of a palpable error of the press,—surely sustain themselves without argument.

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"*Isab.* Else let my brother die,  
 If not a feodary, but only he,  
 Owe, and succeed by weakness."

This passage is generally confessed to be the most obscure of the very obscure passages which are found in the original text and nearly all of the reprints of this noble play. The commentators and editors, from Warburton to Knight, confess its great difficulty; and when I have claimed a comparative freedom from obscurity for Shakespeare's style, this passage, oftener than any other, has been pointed out to me as a stumbling block by those unread in the earlier English literature. There was a time when it was not quite clear to me; but upon reading it in the original, it became as comprehensible as any passage in Shakespeare's works,

although it contains three words not used in their common, modern acceptation. .

The speech being obscure to the editors, they sought to elucidate it by the change of a word ; they substituted *by* for “*thy*” of the original, where the lines stand thus :

“Else let my brother die  
If not a fedarie but only he  
Owe, and succeed thy weakness.”

*Angelo* has just said to *Isabella* “We are all frail ;” and this reply of hers to his general assertion, draws from him the prompt rejoinder,

“Nay, women are frail too.”

He does not simply say, “women are frail,” but “*Nay*, women are frail *too* ;” which plainly shows that *Isabella*’s answer had confined this frailty to men ; and in the original, she does, by implication, limit it to *Claudio*, *Angelo* and their fellows. —Speaking to the latter of his frailty, she says, “*thy* weakness ;” and the change to “*by* weakness,” has only made confusion worse confounded in the heads of those who were confused before.

The word which is looked upon as the cause of the difficulty is “*fedary*.” But this, as Dr. Richardson’s Dictionary assures us, and as a line in *Cymbeline* plainly shows, means simply ‘an associate,’ ‘a fellow’—in crime, or in frailty, or in any thing else,

“*Pisanio*.           O damn’d paper !  
Black as the ink that’s on thee. Senseless bauble,  
Art thou a *fedary* for this act, and look’st  
So virgin like without !”

*Cymbeline*, Act III. Sc. 2.

Again in the *Winter's Tale* :

"She is a traitor, and Camillo is  
A *federary* with her."

*Winter's Tale*, Act II. Sc. 1.

"Owe," as every reader of Shakespeare knows, signifies  
'have,' 'possess.' As for instance, in this very play :

"*Lucio.*                      When maidens sue  
Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel,  
All their petitions are as freely theirs  
As they themselves would *owe* them."

This use of the word occurs again and again throughout Shakespeare's works.

But the principal difficulty with those who fail to understand the passage, I have found to be the result of a very easy misapprehension of the sense in which a word in every-day use,—'succeed,' is used here. On account of the substitution of *by* for "thy," it has been very naturally, in fact unavoidably supposed, that "succeed" means 'have success.' This makes the line in effect,—'owe, and have success *by* weakness : ' a very foggy statement, which is not much cleared by inserting the original word, which makes it "owe and have success *thy* weakness." All this difficulty is removed by observing that "succeed" is here used in its more primitive sense, 'to follow.' "Succeed thy weakness" is, in other words, 'follow thee in thy weakness,' 'take after thy weakness.' Another of Shakespeare's plays furnishes us with a use of this word exactly in point.

"*Countess.* Be thou blest, Bertram ; and *succeed* thy father  
In manners, as in shape."

*All's Well, &c.*, Act I. Sc. 1.



There is therefore not the least obscurity or difficulty in the original text, which, paraphrased in prose, is simply this :

*Ang.* We are all frail.

*Isab.* Yes ; otherwise let my brother die, if no companion in frailty, but he alone, be possessed of and take after thy weakness.

The propriety of *Angelo's* instant reply, including women in the charge of frailty is then obvious. Retain the words of the original, omit one of the two commas usually inserted, and read thus,—the emphatic word in the last two lines being “ he : ”

“ *Ang.* We are all frail,  
*Isab.* Else let my brother die,  
 If not a feodary, but only he,  
 Owe and succeed thy weakness.”

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

“ *Isab.* the poor beetle, that we tread upon  
 In corporal suffrance finds a pang as great  
 As when a giant dies.”

The almost universal perversion of these lines to a plea for long life to beetles, justifies a repetition of the explanation of the passage previously made by others. *Isabella* is not reading *Claudio* a lecture upon cruelty to animals. She wishes to impress upon him that the pang of death is chiefly in the dread of death ; and that the giant feels no more of that in dissolution, than the beetle, which a thoughtless heel crushes out of existence. This would seem sufficiently obvious to make mistake impossible ; for she says :

“ The sense of death is *most in apprehension* ; ”  
 And the poor beetle,” &c.



This exquisite song reappears in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bloody Brother*; where, however, it is accompanied by another stanza of almost equal beauty, which begins, as all will remember,

"Hide, oh hide those hills of snow."

Both stanzas are generally printed and quoted, as Shakespeare's; but there has been for nearly a hundred years a grave discussion among the critics as to the authorship of the song; and the point is not considered as decided yet. Some think that Shakespeare wrote both stanzas; others that only the first is his; and a few that he has no part in it. What is denied to him is given to Fletcher [or some forgotten lyric writer of Shakespeare's day]. Mr. Charles Knight, after stating the question as to who wrote the song, Shakespeare or Fletcher, and Malone's opinion that "all the songs in our author's plays appear to have been of his own composition," with Weber's conjecture that Shakespeare wrote the first stanza and Fletcher the second, says: "There is no evidence, we apprehend, external or internal, by which the question can be settled." The Rev. Alexander Dyce concludes a note upon the song, in his careful and scholarlike edition of *Beaumont and Fletcher* (Vol. X., p. 459,) by saying, "I am inclined to believe that it was from the pen of the great dramatist." Bishop Percy, on the contrary, sneers at Sewel and Gildon for attributing it to Shakespeare; and Mr. Collier says: "It may be doubted whether either stanza was the authorship of Shakespeare \* \* \* but his claim may perhaps be admitted until better evidence is adduced to disprove it."

In spite of all this learned uncertainty and disagreement, the problem appears to me to be of easy solution by internal evidence. The song has such a peculiar and subdued beauty, that an examination of its structure can hardly



**But first set my poor heart free,  
Bound in those icy chains by thee."**

Now we cannot say or sing :

**"But first set my poor heart free,  
poor heart free,  
Bound in those icy chains by thee,  
chains by thee."**

And even if we allow that musical license will admit the repetition of "*my poor heart free*," which the sense would require, we still find that the sense will not admit the division of "*icy*," and the repetition of "*-y chains by thee*" which the music would then require. Indeed there is no possible mode of singing the first stanza of this song, as it appears in *Measure for Measure*, to an air adapted to the second stanza ; and, *vice versa*. Although, perhaps, only

"Which thy frozen *blossom* bears."

In the copy of the song set to Dr. Wilson's music, which will be referred to hereafter, and which was published more than half a century before, (1652), this same strange error also occurs; the line there being printed,

"*That thy frozen Blossome bears ;*"

and yet there are several variations in other lines which show that the song published in the text of the edition of 1711 was not taken from this; and, consequently, that one error is not a mere perpetuation of the other. It also occurs in the folio of 1679; where, by the way, the last line is printed,

**"Bound in those *Ivy* chains by thee."**

In a copy of this folio once in my possession, this line was corrected in a handwriting contemporaneous with the volume,

**"Bound in those Ivory chains by thee,"**

a reading which has as much of authority to support it as any one of these in Mr. Collier's second folio of Shakespeare. The frequently repeated error, —blossom for "bosom," does not occur in the original quarto, as I find by examination of a copy of that edition in Mr. Burton's rich collection of early dramatic literature. It seems strange that such a mistake should have crept into the folio edition of the play from a copy of the song set to music.

those who know something of the manner in which the music and words of songs are adapted to each other, can feel the full force of this argument, to them it must be conclusive ; and the point is one upon which there is no appeal from their decision. Shakespeare evidently wrote the first stanza, and some one else,—probably Fletcher, the second.

To this demonstration, not the less conclusive because it does not address itself to all the readers of Shakespeare, there is to be added a moral certainty which can hardly fail of universal apprehension. Having been accustomed to see the two stanzas printed together, I had, in very early youth, thoughtlessly taken it for granted that both were addressed by a lover to his false mistress ; and that impression was of course deepened by all that I ever heard or read about it. Such is the universal opinion as far as I know ; but while musing over it one day, the conviction flashed upon me that though the second verse was written to a woman, the first was as unquestionably addressed by a woman to a man. Reflection upon the following italicised phrases must produce the same conviction in every mind.

“Take, oh *take those lips away,*  
 That so sweetly were *forsworn* ;  
 And those eyes, the break of day,  
 Lights that do mislead the morn :  
 But *my kisses* bring again,  
   bring again,  
*Seals of love*, but seal'd in vain,  
   seal'd in vain.”

The tone of this entire stanza is that of a woman whose love has been betrayed, and who still loves,—as the *Duke* says of *Mariana*, who “hath still in her the continuance of her first affection.” There is, with all the accusation of deliberate falsehood, a manifest upward looking, which is a peculiarity of woman’s love, and which she does not entire-

ly lose, even if she be deserted by him who awakened it. Man, even supposing that he has this feeling under any circumstances, never has it for a woman who has been false to him. The beautiful likening of the eyes to "the break of day," is better suited to the light which beams from a countenance of manly beauty than to the softer and more tender, though not less brilliant glance of a woman. A woman would be very likely to say that her lover's eyes "mislead the morn;" but the figure is rather grand for a lover's address to his mistress. But this, however, is mere opinion upon generalities: let us reason from particulars.

The person into whose mouth the lines are put, first entreats the person to whom they are addressed, to take away those lips that were *forsworn*. Plainly, those lips were masculine; for women do not *swear* love, they *confess* it; *men swear* their devotion. Besides, the lips are to be *taken away*: the kiss then was *offered*, not simply yielded or returned. But again: the singer next says, bring again *my* kisses which were *seals of love*. Plainly, again, the kisses to be restored were feminine; for it is *woman* who gives a kiss as a *seal* of love. The process has formality and signification to her; while to man it is a dear delight, a ceremony, or a recreation, as the case may be: the light in which he regards it being determined entirely by the sentiment which the woman has been able to inspire.

To this proof that the two stanzas were written by different persons and with different motives, there is to be added a radical, though not very wide, difference in spirit between the stanzas. The first is animated purely by sentiment; the second, delicately beautiful as it is, is the expression of a man carried captive solely through his sense of beauty. The reproaches in the first, tell of regret for the love uttered by those "lips that so sweetly were forsworn," of a spell that yet lingers in "those eyes,

the break of day," of a sad, yet sweet and tender memory of those "seals of love" that were "sealed in vain:" the second sings of "hills of snow," "pinks," and a heart bound in the "icy chains" of a "frozen bosom." The first breathes woman's wasted love; the second, man's disappointed passion. The first could not have been written by Fletcher; the second would not have been written by Shakespeare, as a companion to the first.

The fitness of the stanza which appears in *Measure for Measure* is one of its charms. It announces, like an overture, the pathetic theme of the sad Act into which it leads. It introduces us to the "dejected Mariana" of the "moated grange," and she herself tells us that it "pleased her woe." She would not ask for a song, the second stanza of which was that which appears in the *Bloody Brother*. Her command to the boy to break off his song, is no evidence that Shakespeare had written more than one stanza. It is but a dramatic contrivance to produce the effect of an intrusion upon her solitude.

[More than a year after having written out the foregoing deductions from the internal evidence of this song, I have just discovered (April 24th 1852) external evidence which confirms those conclusions. In Playford's *Ayres and Dialogues for One, Two, or Three Voyces; to the Theorbo-Lute or Basse-Viol*,—folio, London, 1659, p. 1, is this very song set to music by Dr. Wilson. It is called *Love's Ingratitude*; and both stanzas are given. The last three syllables of the last two lines are not repeated in either stanza. The Musical Biographies inform us that Dr. Wilson died in 1673, at the age of seventy-nine years. He was therefore but about nine years old when *Measure for Measure* was produced,—1603; and of course could not have composed the music for this song as it was originally sung in that play; but of the music to which the song in the *Bloody*



*Brother*,—produced about 1625, was sung, he might well have been the composer, as he doubtless was. He of course would have been obliged to write it according to the requisitions of the second stanza ; that is, without a repetition of the last phrase of the last two strains of the air ; and so we find he did write it.

[It was not until after the above was written that I possessed, or had access to, a copy of the *Variorum* Shakespeare of 1821, and in that there is a note by Mr. Boswell upon this song, in which he says :

“ The first stanza of this poem, it is true, appears in *Measure for Measure* ; but as it is there supposed to be sung by a boy, in reference to the misfortune of a deserted female, the second stanza could not have been written for that occasion, as being evidently addressed by a male lover to his mistress.”

*Variorum* Shakespeare, Vol. XXI. p. 419.

This is on the right scent, but Mr. Boswell yet failed to see that it led to the all-important conclusion that the first stanza is actually addressed by a woman to a man, and could not be addressed by a man to a woman. He, strangely enough, thinks, that if it must be ascribed to Shakespeare or Fletcher, “ the latter has a better claim ” ; but is inclined to the supposition that this delicate little poem, “ from its popularity at the time, was introduced by the printer to fill up the gap [made by a stage direction, *Here a song*, which frequently occurs in old plays], and gratify his readers, from some now forgotten author,”—evidently showing that he still supposed the song to be the homogeneous production of one hand. He rightly concludes that because the second stanza is obviously addressed to a woman, it could not have been written for this Scene in *Measure for Measure* ; and not noticing, what we have seen is undeniable, that the first stanza is addressed to a man, he confirms

himself in the old belief, that both were addressed to a woman, and determines that Shakespeare wrote neither. It seems strange that Mr. Boswell, having got the glimpse he evidently had of the incongruity of the two stanzas, failed to discover the radical difference between their motives, and the impossibility of the supposition that they were written by the same poet.

With my *Variorum*, or soon after it, I received a copy of a very interesting tract from the pen of Edward F. Rimbault, LL. D., F. S. A., entitled *Who was "Jack Wilson," the singer of Shakespeare's stage?* Mr. Rimbault puts forth, and ably sustains, the conjecture, that John Wilson, Doctor of Music in the University of Oxford, the composer of the music to which the song in the *Bloody Brother* was sung, was the very *Jack Wilson* who we know was the original singer of many of Shakespeare's songs; and that he was the very "*Boy*" who sung this song as it appears in *Measure for Measure*, where the stage direction in the original is, as we have seen,—*Mariana discovered sitting: a Boy singing*. Dr. Rimbault also points out that the date of his birth renders it impossible that Dr. Wilson could have been the composer of the air to which this song was sung in *Measure for Measure*.

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"*Mariana*. Here comes a man of comfort, whose advice  
Hath often still'd my brawling discontent."

Mr. Hallam, in his criticism on this play, has the following passage :

"There is great skill in the invention of Mariana, and without this the story could not have had any thing like a satisfactory termination: yet it is never explained how the Duke had become



acquainted with this secret, and, being acquainted with it, how he had preserved his esteem and confidence in Angelo."

*Introd. to Lit. of Europe*, Vol. III., p. 83.

When a critic's eye takes so wide a range as that taken by the accomplished author of the *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, it is, perhaps, unreasonable to expect him to examine every particular spot in the vast field which he examines ; but may we not reasonably ask that he shall not find fault for the absence of any thing, merely because he does not see it ? *Mariana* gives ample evidence, in these lines, of the manner in which the *Duke* became acquainted with her story. It is the first we see of her : the *Duke* enters as a Friar ; and she speaks of him as a man of comfort who has "*often*" stilled her discontent. The *Duke*, since he assumed his disguise, has evidently seen her frequently in the discharge of the duties of his pretended calling ; and thus has learned *Angelo's* secret and the woes of his victim. This also shows that a long time is supposed to elapse between the first Scene of the play and the beginning of the fourth Act. If we follow the events closely, however, we shall find that only two days elapse between the arrest of *Claudio* and the opening of this Act. But a month may have elapsed between the first Scene of the first Act and the arrest of *Claudio*. It is in the first Scene of the play that the *Duke* shows his confidence in *Angelo*, and retires, leaving the government in his hands ; and it is not until after his assumption of the Friar's habit, in the fourth, or more properly, the third Scene of the same Act, that he learns, from *Mariana*, his deputy's base treatment of her. It was necessary to throw a Scene between the retirement of the *Duke* and his appearance in the monastery to assume the Friar's habit ; and in that Scene *Claudio* is arrested. *Angelo* receives his vicarious

charge in one Scene, and *Claudio* appears on his way to prison, a condemned man, in the next. But this concerns one of those comparatively unimportant unities about which Shakespeare did not burden himself. He did not think it necessary to provide for the doubts of those who could suppose that *Angelo* would assume the reins of government, hunt up "all the enrolled penalties" which had for "nineteen zodiacs" "like unsoured armor, hung by the wall," hear of *Claudio's* offence, arrest, try, and sentence him, all in one day, or one week. The first Scene of this play is but a kind of *Induction* which furnishes the conditions of the action.

## SCENE 3.

"*Duke.* How now ! What noise ! That spirit's possessed with haste  
That wounds the unsisting postern with these knocks."

The second line contains a misprint, almost without doubt, which is plausibly corrected, in Mr. Collier's folio, to,

"That wounds the *resisting* postern with these knocks."

This should doubtless be received into the text. Indeed the only wonder is, that it should so long have escaped the very obvious correction. Mr. Knight's suggestion that the word in the original "is one of Shakespeare's Latinisms by which he means, never at rest, from *sisto*, to stand still," does not agree with the context ; for the repeated "*knocking within*," shows that then the postern did stand still, much to the annoyance of the knocker ; and that, therefore, the idea of its frequent turning upon its hinges would be the last to enter the mind of the *Duke* at that time.

## ACT V. SCENE 1.

"*Isab.* And I did yield to him ; But the next morn betimes,  
His purpose surfeiting, he sends a warrant  
For my poor brother's head.

*Duke.* This is most likely !

*Isab.* O that it were as like as it is true !"

*Isabella's* answer is incomprehensible to me, as the editors interpret it. Warburton's explanation of it is only food for laughter. He says : "*Like* is not here used for *probable*, but for *seemly*. She catches at the *Duke's* word and turns it into another sense." Malone gives it as his opinion, that *Isabella's* meaning is, "O that it had as much of the *likeness* or *appearance* as it has of the *reality* of truth." This would do very well, if there were any justification for it in *Isabella's* reply. But she makes no comparison of seeming truth and real truth. She merely says, "O that it were *as like* as it is true." Mr. Knight says that "*like*" is used here in the sense of 'probable.' How so ? *Isabella* has just told the *Duke*, that *Angelo*, in spite of his promise, beheaded her brother ; and this, *she believes*. The *Duke* says, in pretended derision, "This is most likely" [*probable*]. Why *Isabella* should then reply, "O that it were as *probable* as it is true !" seems inexplicable. Her wishes are all *against* the probability of such a story ; although, as she thinks that the most important events which she mentions, *i. e.*, the guilt of *Angelo* and the death of her brother, have occurred, she wishes her story to obtain full credence.

Is it not plain that "likely" and "like" are here used by Shakespeare in the sense of 'credible?' 'Credible' and 'probable,' although they are not interchangeable words, and, in truth, express essentially different relations of

thought to fact,—‘credible’ being ‘that which may be believed,’ and ‘probable,’ ‘that which may happen,’—yet always apply in the same degree to any statement. Credibility and probability are as distinct as belief and existence; but whatever is probable is credible, and credibility is in exact proportion to probability. ‘Likely’ means ‘probable,’—i. e., that is probable, which is *likely to happen*; and so may it not mean ‘credible,’—i. e., that which is *likely to be believed*? The lexicographers give no example of the use of ‘likely’ for ‘credible’—all their quotations exhibiting the word used in the sense of ‘probable;’ and except in this passage I know of no instance of its use in the other sense. But is it not plain that here it means, not ‘likely to happen,’ but ‘likely to be believed;’ and that when the *Duke* says, ironically, “This is most likely [to be believed],” *Isabella* replies, in earnest, “O that it were as like [to be believed] as it is true?”

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“*Duke* (as *Friar*). I protest that I love the Duke as I love myself.

*Ang.* Hark! how the villain would close now, after his treasonable abuses!”

Why “close”? The word is plainly, in my judgment, a misprint for ‘glose’, meaning, to cover falsehood with a specious show; and the line should be,

“Hark! how the villain would *glose* now, after his treasonable abuses!”

But as “close” may mean, ‘finish his speeches,’ feeble and prosaic as the sense is, I feel that I have not the right, merely of my own motion, to change even the one letter which, in my opinion, would restore what *Shakespeare* wrote.



## COMEDY OF ERRORS.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Dro. E.* If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,  
Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name or thy name for an  
ass."

In this reply of *Dromio of Ephesus* to his brother, who, shut up within doors, usurps, as he thinks, both his name and his office, the last word is evidently misprinted ; and we should read " thy name for a *face*," which is the change suggested in Mr. Collier's folio.

### SCENE 2.

"*Ant. S.* Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,  
And as a bed I'll take thee, and there lie."

Is it not plain that " thee " is a misprint for *them*, and that we should read,

" Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,  
And as a bed I'll take *them*, and there lie." ?

[In the *Variorum* Edition I find this conjecture credited to a Mr. Edwards, whose comments I have not met with.

## ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Ang.* Come, come, you know, I gave it you even now ;  
Either send the chain, or send me by some token."

It is very plain that there is a transposition in the second line, and that we should read,

"Either send the chain, or send *by me* some token."

Malone objects to this obvious and very necessary change, that "it was not Angelo's meaning \* \* \* that *Antipholus of Ephesus* should send a jewel or other token—*by him*, but that *Antipholus* should send him with a verbal token to his wife." Malone supposes the phrase to be but a modification of that which is used by the vulgar now-a-days, thus :—"My master has sent me to you for his cloth, and *by the same token* he dined abroad yesterday." But what difference does it make whether the token was visible and tangible, or verbal ? The goldsmith wanted some evidence which would justify the wife of *Antipholus* in paying the money ; and he asks for the chain, or a token from *Antipholus* that he had the chain. But a little before, *Antipholus* had said to him :

"Good signor, take the stranger to my house ;  
And with you take the chain, and bid my wife  
Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof."

The merchant wanted the chain, or a voucher for it. The phrase could not have been used in the sense which Malone suggests ; because a declaration to one person, 'by this token [know that] *I am sent*,' has evidently a very different signification from a request to another *to be sent* "by some token ;"—if indeed the latter have any meaning at all.



## SCENE 3.

"*Drom. S.* Master, if you do, expect spoon meat, or bespeak a long spoon.

*Ant. S.* Why, Dromio?

*Drom. S.* Marry, he must have a long spoon that must eat with the devil."

The original folio gives this reading, except that 'you' is omitted by an obvious typographical error. Another error in *Dromio's* first speech is equally obvious. In allusion to the old proverb which he afterwards repeats, *Dromio* tells his master, that if he dine with this she devil, he must expect spoon meat, and must provide himself with a long spoon. The separative "or" entirely destroys the sense, not to say the humor of *Dromio's* reply. Why should *Antipholus* be warned *either* to expect spoon meat *or* to bespeak a long spoon. He was warned to do both; and, according to the proverb, certainly to do the last, if he eat with the devil. Read :

"Master, if you do, expect spoon meat, *and* bespeak a long spoon."

## ACT V. SCENE 1.

"*Abbess.* Twenty-five years have I but gone in travail  
Of you, my sons, until this present hour,  
My heavy burden not delivered.  
The duke, my husband, and my children both,  
And you the calendars of their nativity,  
Go to a gossip's feast, and go with me :  
After so long grief, such nativity!"

Thus the passage stands in the *Variorum* edition. The original text is :

"Thirtie three yeares haue I but gone in trauaile  
Of you my sonnes, and till this present houre  
My heaue burthen are delivered."

Mr. Dyce and Mr. Singer read,

"and till this present hour  
My heavy burden *ne'er* delivered."

Mr. Collier,

"and till this present hour  
My heavy burden *undelivered*."

Theobald and Mr. Knight,

"*nor*, till this present hour  
My heavy burdens *are* delivered."

*Blackwood's Magazine*,—Aug. 1853,

"and till this present hour  
My heavy burden *has* delivered."

It seems plain to me that *Æmilia* refers to place no less than to time. After her long travail, it was there, as well as then, that she was delivered. Should we not read ?

Twenty-five years have I but gone in travail  
Of you my sons; and till this present hour  
My heavy burthen *here* delivered.

That is, of course,—‘I have but gone in travail till this present hour delivered me here of my heavy burthen.’ It should be noticed that ‘*here*’ is much more like the ‘*are*,’ of the original than either ‘*ne’er*,’ ‘*un*,’ or ‘*has*’ are; and that by this reading, the substitution of *nor* for “and” is

not required. Thus, by the least possible change from the original text, we obtain the most exact and descriptive expression of *Æmilia's* position.

It is possible that some of my readers may need to be reminded that "thirty-three" of the original text is shown by the internal evidence of the play, to be an error for *twenty-five*.

The last two lines of this speech evidently contain a typographical error each, which Mr. Singer, in his *Vindication of the text*, &c., corrects by reading :

"Go to a gossip's feast, and *joy* with me,  
After so long grief, such *festivity*."

"Nativity" was probably repeated by the compositor, who had the word still in his mind after having set it up at the end of the line next but one before ; "and *joy*" might be easily misprinted "and *go*." I had written *en-joy* on the margin of my Shakespeare, for "and go ;" but Mr. Singer's conjecture is more like the original text, and is therefore entitled to the preference.

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Leon.* How many gentlemen have you lost in this action ?

*Mess.* But few of any sort, and none of name."

Upon this passage Mr. Dyce remarks :

"According to Monk Mason, 'of *any sort*' means—of any kind whatsoever; an interpretation which, though manifestly wrong, has found approvers. The reply of the Messenger is equivalent to—But few gentlemen of any rank, and none of celebrity. So presently he says to Beatrice, 'I know none of that name, lady; there was none such in the army of *any sort*.' So, too, in *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, act iii. sc. 2;

"none of noble *sort*  
Would so offend a virgin ; "

and in Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*,—*Works*, i. 24, ed. Gifford; "*A gentleman of your sort*, parts," &c. : and in *A Warning for Faire Women*, 1599;

"The Queene our mistris  
Allowes this bounty to all commers, much more  
To *gentlemen of your sort*."

*A Few Notes*, &c., p. 38.

I cannot see the force of Mr. Dyce's reasons. The *Messenger* means, according to my understanding of his words, 'But few gentlemen of *any* description, and none of distinction.'

Mr. Dyce's quotations do not aid him ; because either of the synonymous words 'description,' 'condition,' 'position,' 'kind,' fills the place of "sort" in all the passages cited by him. Thus :

"I know none of that name, lady ; there was none such in the army of *any description*."

"none of *noble kind*  
Would so offend a virgin."

"A gentleman of *your position*, parts," &c.

"The Queene, our mistris,  
Allows this bounty to all commers, much more  
To gentlemen of *your condition*."

If 'sort' mean 'rank,' *par excellence*, i. e. noble rank, —to say 'noble sort' would be to be guilty of the worst sort of tautology. 'Sort' would, in that case, need,—in fact, admit, no such adjective before it ; and the lines from *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* furnish proof positive that 'sort,' when thus used, means merely 'kind.' The word is applied to persons, in this sense, and with various adjectives before it, throughout Shakespeare's works ; as,—“spirits of vile sort,” “the vulgar sort of market-men ;” and even, “the poor men of your sort,” and “the younger sort,” as well as “gentlemen of good sort” and “prisoners of good sort ;” and we have also “a sort of men,” and “all sorts of men.” There is only one passage in all Shakespeare's works which would seem to sustain Mr. Dyce, and which, strange to say, so accomplished a Shakesperian scholar as he has failed to quote. In *Measure for Measure* 'sort' is used, without

an adjective, evidently to mean, high rank or station. The *Duke* is about to return to Vienna, and *Angelo* says to *Escalus* :

“ Well, I beseech you, let it be proclaim’d :  
 Betimes i’ the morn, I’ll call you at your house.  
 Give notice to such men of *sort* and suit,  
 As are to meet him.”

But here it is used as we sometimes use ‘character ;’ saying, ‘ a man of character,’ *i. e.* a man of excellent character. Such cannot be the use of ‘ sort ’ in the instances previously quoted by Mr. Dyce ; for unless circumstances evidently point to such a signification, and a word is used absolutely and without an adjective, it cannot be thus arbitrarily raised from its inferior and general sense to one higher and particular.

#### ACT II. SCENE 3.

“ *Claud.* Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses,—“ O sweet Benedick ! God give me patience ! ”

Here “ curses ” is, almost without a doubt, an error of the press for *cries*, to which it is changed by the corrector of Mr. Collier’s folio.

#### ACT III. SCENE 1.

*Hero* being asked when she is to be married, replies, “ Why, evrie day, to-morrow.” The answer is incomprehensible, on account of a misprint which is thus corrected in Mr. Collier’s folio, “ Why, in a day,—to-morrow.” There can be no doubt that this restores the author’s words.

## SCENE 2.

"*D. Pedro.* —he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bowstring, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him."

Mr. Dyce conjectures that "hangman" here is equivalent to 'rascal,' 'rogue,' and quotes passages from writers contemporaneous with Shakespeare, in which 'hangman' is used as a general term of reproach. There can be no doubt of the correctness of Mr. Dyce's supposition, which seems, in fact, almost too obvious to need support or bear statement. Shakespeare unquestionably used the word in the same sense in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, as one of the correctors of Mr. Collier's folio happily conjectured.

"*Launce.* Ay, sir; the other squirrel was stolen from me by a hangman boy in the market place."

Act IV. Sc. 4.

—Instead of "the hangman's boys."

## ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Leon.* Thought I thy spirits stronger than thy shames,  
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,  
Strike at thy life."

"Rearward" is misprinted *reward* in the first folio; but the error of the press is corrected in the second. Mr. Collier's MS. corrector, however, changes "rearward" for the tame word *hazard*; and Mr. Collier calls it "the true reading."

In Shakespeare's plays 'rearward,' it is true, does not elsewhere occur with this signification,—a fact which, how-

ever, is of little consequence ; but had Mr. Collier or his MS. *protégé* ever read, marked, or understood those lines of noble sorrow in the 90th Sonnet?—

“Then hate me when thou wilt ; if ever, now ;  
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,  
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow ;  
And do not drop in for an after-loss.  
Ah! do not, when my heart hath scaped this sorrow,  
Come in the *rearward* of a conquered woe:  
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,  
To linger out a purposed overthrow.”

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“*Leon.*                    O she is fallen  
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea  
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,  
And salt too little, which may season give  
To her foul tainted flesh.”

Mr. Collier's folio changes the hemistich to,

“To her *soul*-tainted flesh.”

It were well for Mr. Collier's reputation had he merely set this forth as a happy conjecture, or even as the true reading. But he must give for it this extraordinary, this preposterous reason—“Hero's *flesh was tainted to the soul* by the accusation brought against her.” What a focus of blunders there is in that unfortunate sentence ! It is hardly necessary to point out, that *Leonato* supposed his daughter's soul, and, figuratively, her flesh, to be tainted by her moral crime. Indeed, it is noteworthy that one consequence of the publication of Mr. Collier's *Notes and Emendations* is the self-exposure of the astounding fact, that this veteran in the field of Shakesperian literature has not a nice and true appreciation of Shakespeare. His learning no one can



question ; but his reputation as one who has fathomed the deeps of Shakespeare, who has "plucked out the heart of his mystery," is gone for ever. In blackletter and antiquarian lore, he can hardly have a rival ; but there are few real lovers of Shakespeare who do not hold a closer commune with the spirit of their master. Among his editors, may be named Charles Knight, who, with vastly fewer advantages in the field of Shakesperian literature, must now be placed far before his rival editor as a true Shakesperian scholar. Charles Knight would never have said, when *Hamlet* chides himself because he "lacks gall to make oppression bitter," that "it was not oppression but crime which was to be *punished* (!) by him." Charles Knight would never have supposed that *Hero's* flesh was tainted *to the soul*, sooner than he would have made a score of other blunders in the appreciation of Shakespeare's poetry and humor which appear in Mr. Collier's recent publication.

But with regard to this passage, it should be noticed that a change is not imperatively necessary. The adjectives are not really synonymous ; and a comma between them is all that is required to give a clear and appropriate sense. Read,—

" which may season give  
To her foul, tainted flesh."

Taint does not always reach foulness in degree, but it does imply previous purity ; whereas many things are foul from the beginning and in their very essence. *Leonato* says that *Hero's* nature, once pure, had been tainted to the utmost degree of impurity.

## SCENE 2.

" *Const.* Come let them be opinioned.

*Sex.* Let them be in the hands of *Coxcombe*.

*Kem.* God's my life, where's the Sexton! let him write down the Prince's officer *Coxcombe*," &c.

This apparently hopeless confusion in the original text, is thus happily corrected in Mr. Collier's folio.

*Const.* Come, let them be opinion'd.

*Sex.* Let them be bound.

*Borach.* Hands off, Coxcombe!

*Dogb.* God's my life," &c.

"*Kem.*" is the abbreviation of Kempe. William Kempe was the first *Dogberry*; and the original folio, having been in part printed from a copy marked for the stage, gives in this instance and in some others, the name of the actor instead of that of the character.

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"*Dogb.* Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years!—O that he were here to write me down—an ass;—but, masters, remember, that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass:—No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow; and, which is more, an officer; and, which is more, a householder; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina; and one that knows the law, go to: and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him:—Bring him away. O, that I had been writ down—an ass."

Could there be a stronger proof of incapacity to appreciate that peculiar and inimitable humor which Shakespeare has exhibited in *Dogberry* and a few such characters, than an attempt to make the consequential Constable speak "by the card" in this blundering out-burst of pompous indignation? And yet the corrector of Mr. Collier's folio would have him say "a fellow that hath had *leases*," instead of "a fellow that hath had losses"! Mr. Singer's

severe remarks upon this evidence of incapacity are entirely justifiable.

But this wretched and presumptuous change has yet found defenders, (what folly is so foolish as to be without them !) on the ground that, as *Dogberry* is boasting, it is inconsistent for him to mention his misfortunes. Let Sir Walter Scott answer such a purblind argument as this. He was guiltless of deliberate comment upon Shakespeare ; but he opens the introduction to *Quentin Durward* thus :

“ When honest *Dogberry* sums up and recites all the claims which he had to respectability, and which, as he opined, ought to have exempted him from the injurious appellation conferred on him by Master Gentleman Conrade, it is remarkable that he lays not more emphasis even upon his double gown (a matter of some importance in a certain ci-devant capital which I wot of), or upon his being ‘a pretty piece of flesh as any in Messina,’ or even upon the conclusive argument of his being ‘a rich fellow enough,’ than upon his being *one that hath had losses*.

“ Indeed, I have always observed your children of prosperity, whether by way of hiding their full glow of splendor from those whom fortune has treated more harshly, or whether that to have risen in spite of calamity is as honorable to their fortune as it is to a fortress to have undergone a siege,—however this be, I have observed that such persons never fail to entertain you with an account of the damage they sustain by the hardness of the times.  
• • • • “ I therefore put in my proud claim to share in the distresses which only affect the wealthy ; and write myself down, with *Dogberry*, ‘a rich fellow enough,’ but still ‘one who hath had losses.’ ”

Walter Scott and human nature at the back of the authentic folio, against an anonymous and, as his labors show, a blundering tamperer with the text of Shakespeare !

# LOVE'S LABORS LOST.

## ACT I. SCENE 1.

*Biron.* [*Reads.*] Item, "That no woman shall come within a mile of my court."—Hath this been proclaim'd?

*Long.* Four days ago.

*Biron.* Let's see the penalty. [*Reads.*] "On pain of losing her tongue."—Who devis'd this penalty?

*Long.* Marry, that did I.

*Biron.* Sweet lord, and why?

*Long.* To fright them hence with that dread penalty.

*Biron.* A dangerous law against gentility."

Thus the original. At first "gentility" seems in this place an unintelligible word, which Mr. Collier's MS. corrector very plausibly changes to,

"A dangerous law against *garrulity*."

But it should be remarked that *Biron* is not one of those who approve of these regulations; and that he does not yet consider himself strictly bound by them. Thus, in his first speech in this scene, he says:

"I can but say their protestation over;  
So much, dear liege, I have already sworn,  
That is, to live and study here three years.  
But there are other strict observances;  
As, *not to see a woman in that term,*  
*Which, I hope well, is not enrolled there:*" &c.

and again,

"I only *swore* to study with your grace."

He finds fault with this law which has the lingual penalty ; and it should be noticed that it is the law, and not the penalty, which he says is dangerous against gentility. He evidently means that the exclusion of ladies, involving, as it does, the loss of their refining and subduing influence upon the manners, is "a dangerous law against *gentility*." There is no justification for a change in the original text. A thorough examination of the context will often, as it has done in this case, show the propriety of a phrase in that text, which to one who looks at the phrase alone will seem obscure.

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*King.* A letter from the magnificent Armado.

*Biron.* How low soever the matter, I hope for high words.

*Long.* A high hope for a low having ; God grant us patience !

*Biron.* To hear ! or forbear hearing !

*Long.* To hear meekly, sir, and to laugh moderately ; or to forbear both."

For "a low heaven" in the original, Theobald judiciously proposed "a low *having*;" but the succeeding speech of *Biron* obviously needs correction. *Biron* knowing *Armado's* affectation of magnificence, says that how low soever the matter of his letter may be, they may hope for high words. *Longaville* then asks, "a high hope for a low having?" and at the prospect exclaims "God grant us patience!" *Biron* then asks *Longaville*,—[patience for what], "to hear or to forbear laughing" [at what you do hear?] 'Hearing' is an evident and an easy misprint for 'laughing,' as Steevens well suggested. *Longa-*

*ville's* reply—"To hear meekly *and* to laugh moderately, or to forbear *both*," compels the change. Read,

"*Long.* A high hope for a low having! God grant us patience!

*Biron.* To hear! or forbear *laughing*!

*Long.* To hear meekly," &c.

In the same Scene the "Sirra, come on," which the original gives to *Biron*, probably belongs to the *Constable*, to whom Mr. Collier's folio assigns it.

## ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Rosaline.* No point; with my knife."

Steevens and Malone, and recently Mr. Dyce, have pointed out that we have here the double negative of the French language, with a quibble involved. It should be printed,

"No, *point*; with my knife."

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"*Boyet.* His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,  
Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be.  
All senses to that sense did make their repair,  
*To feel only looking* on fairest of fair."

"On the first line of this passage the following notes are found in the *Variorum Shakespeare*:—

'That is—his tongue being impatiently desirous to see ~~as~~ well as speak.' JOHNSON.

'Although the expression in the text is extremely odd, I take the sense of it to be, that—his tongue envied the quickness of his eyes, and strove to be as rapid in its utterance, as they in

their perception. *Edinburgh Magazine*, Nov., 1786,' STEEVENS.

"Now, it would be difficult to say which of these notes is least to the purpose. The context distinctly shows that the meaning is—His tongue, *not able to endure* the having merely the power of speaking without that of seeing.

"Again, on the fourth line we find, *ibid* :—

"Perhaps we may better read: 'To *feed* only *by* looking.'

JOHNSON.

"There is no necessity for any alteration. The meaning is—  
— That they might have no feeling but that of looking, &c."

*Dyce's Few Notes*, &c., p. 52.

Unquestionably Mr. Dyce is right; but I cannot conceal my surprise that a moment's doubt upon so simple a passage could possibly occur to any one out of a mad-house.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Biron*. Dread prince of plackets."

"Concerning '*placket*,' see Steevens's *Amnerian* note on *King Lear*, act iii. sc. 4; and *Dict. of Arch. and Prov. Words*, by Mr. Halliwell; who observes: 'Nares, Dyce, and other writers, tell us a *placket* generally signifies a petticoat, but their quotations do not bear out this opinion.' I still think that in the quotations referred to, as well as in the present passage, '*placket*' is equivalent to petticoat. A writer of the age of Charles the Second uses '*plackets*' in the sense of *aprons* (perhaps of *petticoats*); 'The word Love is a fig-leaf to cover the naked sense, a fashion brought up by Eve, the mother of jilts; she cuckolded her husband with the Serpent, then pretended to modesty, and fell a making *plackets* presently.' Crowne's *Sir Courtly Nice*, act ii. p. 13, ed. 1685."

*Dyce's Few Notes*, &c., p. 53.

Mr. Steevens, Mr. Nares, and Mr. Dyce, might have

been saved their labors, and Mr. Halliwell his doubts, by inquiring of the Benedicks among their fellow Shakesperians on this side the water concerning this word. Ladies in the northern part of the United States call that aperture in their petticoats (upper and under) which extends from the back of the waist about one quarter down the skirt, the 'placket-hole;' and so did their grandmothers, great-grandmothers, and great-great-grandmothers. Mr. Douce, to whose learning and judgment the students of Shakespeare are so much indebted says, "a placket is a petticoat." Had he been writing for Americans he need not have said it.

#### ACT IV. SCENE 3.

In the defective line of *Dumain's* sonnet,

"Thou for whom Jove would swear,"

Pope read "*even* Jove;" Mr. Collier's margins give "*great* Jove," with more fitness and probability, if, indeed, a syllable must be added.

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"*Dum.* This will I send; and something else more plain  
That shall express my true love's fasting pain."

"My true love's fasting pain" sounds like a misprint of "my true love's *lasting* pain," to which it is changed by one of the few happy conjectures in Mr. Collier's folio.

---

"*Biron.* I am betray'd by keeping company  
With men like men, of strange inconstancy."





Warburton changed the "men like men" of the original to "*vane* like men;" and Steevens substitutes "*moon* like men," which until recently has held undisputed possession of the text. Mr. Knight very properly retains the original; and says that it means, "I keep company with men alike in inconstancy—men like men—men having the general inconstancy of humanity;" but he does not point out the confirmatory fact, that, in a subsequent speech, *Biron* repeats, in another form, this very idea,—that his companions fell through human frailty. He says:

"Sweet lords, sweet lovers, O let us embrace!  
*As true we are as flesh and blood can be:*  
 The sea will ebb and flow, and heaven will show his face;  
 Young blood doth not obey an old decree."

---

"*Biron*. Now, for not looking on a woman's face,  
 You have in that forsworn the use of eyes,  
 And study, too, the causer of your vow;  
 For where is any author in the world,  
 Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye!  
 Learning is but an adjunct to ourself,  
 And where we are, our learning likewise is:  
 Then, when ourselves we see in ladies' eyes,  
 Do we not likewise see our learning there!"

The context shows undeniably that,

"Teaches such *beauty* as a woman's eye,"

is a misprint. Mr. Collier's folio substitutes *learning* for "beauty," a change which is for the better. But a correspondent in Maine, of whom I know only that he is an intelligent and careful student of Shakespeare, suggests *study* instead of learning, "because the former seems to be a more plausible correction of a probable misprint than the latter;

and because *study* is a more appropriate word to follow 'study' in the second line above the one in which the disputed word occurs." His suggestion is possibly as acceptable as that of Mr. Collier's folio. Either word will fulfil all the conditions of the case ; and we may read :

"Now, for not looking on a woman's face,  
You have in that forsworn the use of eyes;  
And study too, the causer of your vow;  
For where is any author in the world,  
Teaches such *study* as a woman's eye!"

In other words,—‘as study is your object, where is there any author teaches such study [i. e. any thing that is studied] as a woman's eye?’

#### ACT V. SCENE 2.

*Rosaline*, speaking of the capricious power she would exercise over *Biron*, says,

"So pertaunt like I would ovesway his state  
That he should be my fool and I his fate."

This Mr. Collier's folio changes to,

"So *potently* I would ovesway his state," &c.

which is the best emendation of the passage yet offered, and one so obvious that it seems strange that it has not come to light before.

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"*Boyet*. Their purpose is to parle, to court, and dance:  
And every one his love feat will advance  
Unto his several mistress."

The old fashioned long *s* is responsible for an error in the line,

"And every one his love feat will advance,"

which should surely be, as Mr. Collier's MS. corrector conjectures,

"And every one his love *suit* will advance  
Unto his several mistress."

---

"*Prin.* That sport best pleases that doth least know how.  
Where Zeale striues to content, and the contents  
Dies in the Zeale of that which it presents."

A great deal of labor and ingenuity has been expended upon this passage, which appears thus in the original folio, and is evidently corrupted ; but the correction has always seemed to me simple and obvious. Years ago, before I had seen a *Variorum* Shakespeare, or read a commentator, I made the following correction upon the margin of my copy ; a correction, however, which my subsequent reading has not discovered to me elsewhere. But first let us define clearly the meaning of the *Princess*. She evidently wishes to enjoy the absurd figure which *Armado*, *Holofernes* and the rest will cut as the Worthies. She, in the words of *Philostrate*, when he speaks enjoying the play of the Clowns, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*,

"can find sport in their intents  
Extremely stretch'd, and conn'd with cruel pain."

She takes a mischievous pleasure in bathos ; and finds it mirth-moving, as she says in this very speech,

"When great things laboring, perish in their birth."

It is agreed on all hands that "that," of the original, is a misprint for *them*; and it seems equally plain to me that no other change is necessary than to drop the final *s* from each line :—Thus :

"That sport best pleases that doth least know how :  
Where zeal strives to content, and the content  
Dies in the zeal of them which it present.

That is,—that sport is keenest which is made by the zealous efforts of ignorant people to produce a pleasing effect, which they destroy by overdoing the matter in their very zeal.

---

"*Armado*. For mine own part, I breathe free breath: I have seen the day of wrong through the little hole of discretion," &c.

Some idea of the incapacity of the Shakespearian commentators of the eighteenth century for their task, may be obtained from the fact that *Armado's* affected and quaint, but graphic and humorous figure, "I have seen the day of wrong through the little hole of discretion," seems to them incomprehensible, or at least to require explanation. Bishop Warburton, *more suo*, does not mince matters, but blurts out,—“This has no meaning;” and then the others labor away at elucidation. As it is with little things so it is with great. Shakespeare's sublime, far-reaching thoughts, as well as his delicate strokes of characteristic humor, are passed, unnoticed or misunderstood, by these men, while they solemnly give him credit for “very judicious remarks,” or “very apt and learned comparisons,” in those portions of his plays less informed with his grand and peculiar genius.

They see only the worth of that which is but the setting of the jewels of his thought. When shall his text be entirely freed from the baneful influence which they have exerted upon it ?

---

"*Pris.* I understand you not, my griefs are double."

There is a plausibility in the change of "double" into *dull*, which is made in Mr. Collier's folio. But hear Mr. Singer's remark upon it !

"Specious, but incorrect ; the error lies in the small word *are*, which is a misprint for *see*. Read,

" 'I understand you not, my griefs *see* double.' "

Mr. Singer ! Mr. Singer ! A lady, and a princess too ! Do you mean to insinuate that she had sought to drown her sorrows in the flowing bowl, that you make her thus *see double* ?

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**CORRECTION.**

Further reflection has convinced me, that in the line,

"Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye,"  
*Act I. Sc. 1.*

the substitution of *learning* for "beauty" by Mr. Collier's folio undoubtedly restores the original word, and that *study* has no claim to the place. Although 'study' was used for 'learning' in Shakespeare's day, still the phrase, "teaches such *study*," is awkward ; and there is far more similarity between the letters in '*learning*' and '*beauty*,' than between those in the latter word and those in '*study*.'

## A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

The high place which the poetry of this play holds even among the poetry of Shakespeare, is admitted by all who are capable of appreciating it. There is perhaps not another production of the human mind which so has the power to make us forget the realities of life, and live for a time in the realms of fancy. Dr. Johnson, it is true, could examine and graciously approve Master William Shakespeare's 'composition' in this pedagoguish style :

"Wild and fantastical as this play is, all the parts in their various modes are well written, and give the kind of pleasure which the author designed. Fairies, in his time, were much in fashion : common tradition had made them familiar, and Spenser's poem had made them great."

But Johnson lived, as Mr. Knight well remarks, and as the reader of this volume will be convinced before he finishes it, "in a prosaic age, and fostered in this particular the real ignorance by which he was surrounded. \* \* \* It is perfectly useless to dissect such criticism : let it be a beacon to warn us, and not a 'load-star' to guide us."

But universally as the poetic charm of this play has bound us of the present century, who have returned to the appreciation of Shakespeare which existed in his own day, it has been regarded by some very able critics as unfit for

representation. Some have even gone so far as to say that it shows a failure of the author's constructive ability. The following remarks by Hazlitt are part of a criticism which has been often quoted :

"The *Midsummer Night's Dream*, when acted, is converted from a delightful fiction into a dull pantomime. All that is finest in the play is lost in the representation. The spectacle was grand ; but the spirit was evaporated, the genius was fled. Poetry and the stage do not agree well together. The attempt to reconcile them in this instance fails not only of effect, but of decorum. The *ideal* can have no place upon the stage, which is a picture without perspective : every thing there is in the foreground. That which was merely an airy shape, a dream, a passing thought, immediately becomes an unmanageable reality."

This is well said ; but I venture to doubt the truth of the dogma, that "poetry and the stage do not agree well together ;" and to object, that although it is self-evident that "the *ideal* can have no place upon the stage," it will not do to apply that truth as a test to the fitness of a dramatic composition for the theatre. All characters in the higher drama are ideal ; and the more truthful they are, the more nearly do they approach the true ideal, the conditions of which are the absence of all that is peculiar to the individual, with the presence of all that is characteristic of the species. Exclude any play from the stage, because the ideal is not there attainable, and you strike the whole of Shakespeare's dramatic works from the list of acting plays. *Lear*, *Othello*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* would go with the *Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. *Ariel* and the Fairies, in the last two, are not more impossible than the ghosts and the witches in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, or more ideal than the characters of *Lear* and *Othello*.

It is impossible to admit the inconsistency of poetry and

the stage, without admitting at the same time that all the greatest dramas which the world has seen, all those which have thrilled the souls and quickened the pulses of men for centuries, as well in the theatre as in the closet, are unfit for the stage ; an absurdity which Mr. Hazlitt could not have intended to assert. But if he meant, as it would seem he must have meant, that the recitation of long passages of merely descriptive or didactic poetry clogs dramatic progress, he has asserted an undeniable truth, and one which has a bearing upon the fitness of this play for representation. There are many passages in it which, enchantingly beautiful as they are when read, might, if recited without curtailment upon the stage, be listened to impatiently by a modern audience. But it should be remembered that Shakespeare wrote to please a public which rather craved than eschewed such passages. Men whose fathers, or who themselves in their early days, had listened by the hour to the didactic doggerel of Moralities and Mysteries, and even that of the comedies and tragedies written by Shakespeare's predecessors, would find the longest and least impassioned speech which he has put into the mouth of any character, lively and inspiring. Accustomed, too, as the audiences of that time had been, to the utter absence of scenery and stage effect, a change of scene having been indicated to them simply by rubbing the name of one place off a board and writing that of another on it, and also even to seeing men play women's parts, they would not find fault with the impossibilities of this drama. Bearing this in mind, we can imagine *A Midsummer Night's Dream* played with no less effect now than in Shakespeare's day.\* We should not forget that when it was brought out, *Oberon* and *Titania*

\* It has been. The general public will not soon forget the charm, or the critical, the true Shakesperian flavor of the performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* under the direction of Mr. Burton at his own theatre.



as well as *Hermia* and *Helena* were played by men ; and that no one of our many contrivances for stage effect were known to the managers who first produced it. We have only now to realize the poet's conception to the extent of our ability, as they did to the extent of theirs, and let our imagination supply the rest, to find that this play possesses the power to awake an absorbing interest, though not a profound emotion, in the minds of men in any age of the world.

It is undeniable, however, that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is peculiarly exacting in its requisitions for proper representation. It unites, nay more,—it blends, with an all-controlling hand, the mythology and the manners of classic Greece, with the superstitions and the habits which sprung from the romantic and the grotesque spirit of the Middle Ages. In it, we have demi-gods and Amazons, with fairies and elves ; the two incongruous elements being bound together by two links,—one of human love, the other of human folly. But it is remarkable that, though they are connected, they are not brought together. The kinsman of Hercules and the Queen of the Amazons are brought into contact or relation with the lovers and the clowns ; and the fairies are even more intimately connected with their fortunes ; but the latter and the former never come together,—have no influence upon each other. *Theseus* and *Oberon*, *Hippolyta* and *Titania*, *Puck* and *Philstrate* never meet ; and though working to a common end, have no common purpose. The merely human elements of the play, also, which are essentially incongruous, do not come into contact except nominally, in the last Scene : the Athenian lovers and the amateur Athenian players, who are in fact but representations of the amateur players of the early half of the sixteenth century, are kept as much apart as if they were in different plays. How wonderful is the genius which has bound all these antagonistic powers together without destroying their

individual strength, which has blent all these opposite traits without depriving them of their individual character !

But besides, and beyond this, although the construction of the comedy is no less fraught with the proofs of genius than its poetry, it is yet evident that the dramatic progress and interest of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, if it have any, are totally unlike those of any other dramatic composition which holds possession of the stage. We feel from the beginning, that the fate or even the fancied happiness of not one of the characters is at stake. *Theseus* and his buskined mistress are well content when the play opens ; and we know that the confusion which *Puck* makes with his love-in-idleness is to be mere perplexity, not intended by the dramatist to cause us even an instant's concern, and to be unravelled again by a momentary exercise of the same capricious power which caused it. The Athenian lovers are mere puppets for *Puck* to play with ; and we feel no more troubled when *Lysander* is faithless to *Hermia* and loves *Helena*, than when *Titania* deserts *Oberon* for *Bottom*. The comedy is entirely one of incident. With the emotions of the characters we do not concern ourselves ; they have nothing to do with the progress and determination of the action, and, in fact, are very rarely obtruded upon us by the author.

To this want of ordinary dramatic interest is added the difficulty of accepting ordinary mortals as the representatives of the principal characters of the play. We have an ideal demi-god, an ideal Amazon, an ideal *Oberon*, *Titania* and *Puck* in our minds ; and where indeed is *Cobweb* to come from, he whom good-natured *Nick Bottom* fears to see "overflowed with the honey-bag" of an humble-bee ? What mortal voices can sing, "You spotted snakes, with double tongue ?" These are all practical impossibilities ; but they were even less possible in Shakespeare's day

than in ours ; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was then, as it is now, a successful acting play. For Shakespeare has so wrought this wonderful production, that as it passes before our eyes, our imagination outstrips in creative power the demands of our reason and our taste. True, there can be no *Theseus*, no *Hippolyta*, no Fairy King and Queen, no *Puck* put upon the stage, until the earth produces demigods and monsters ; but neither can the human representative of any character in a production of high Art be found ; and as we look upon the slayer of the Minotaur, and his helmeted, shield-bearing mistress, upon *Oberon*, *Titania* and *Robin Goodfellow*, we are content to think with *Theseus* :—"The best in this kind are but shadows ; and the worst are no worse, if imagination mend them."

There has ever been among modern managers a propensity to make this comedy merely a brilliant spectacle. They have seemed to doubt its intrinsic power to interest, and have put it on the stage only on account of the occasion they found in it to display the labors of the scene painter, the costumer, and the machinist ; to which they have added a crowd of pretty people who have no business in it.

I remember one of these performances. The scenery was very beautiful,—some of it quite grand. *Puck* and *Titania's* attendant Fairy made their first appearance on the shore of a fairy lake which stretched far into the distance. *Puck* was on the back of a peacock, which, when he dismounted, instantly changed into a large tropical flower and disappeared. *Titania* came on, drawn by swans and surrounded by a troop of fairies. *Oberon*, crowned and gorgeously dressed in a gold tunic with a scarlet robe, met her, and when she retired after their little 'tiff,' called up, by a motion of his wand, a gorgeous aquatic equipage, consisting of a huge shell drawn by dolphins. After singing a part of his speech, "I know a bank whereon the wild thyme

grows," as a duet with a fairy, he took his seat, and instead of sailing off, waved his wand, and a panorama of Fairy-land passed before him. This was a very splendid and elaborate affair, and must have occupied ten minutes in passing. The scenery in the second Act was hardly less striking and beautiful; and in this act a *corps de ballet* was introduced, and a French dancer danced a *pas seul*, and with them, a shawl dance while *Titania* slept.

In the last Act, after the interlude had been played and the newly married pairs had left the scene, there was a "magnificent change to Fairy-land," and fairies were seen issuing from the cups of gigantic flowers.

Among the characters, *Puck* was, perhaps, the favorite with the audience. This was not surprising; for the part was given to one of the most charming little children who ever exchanged the caresses of the nursery for the plaudits of a theatre. She had a winning manner, was very prettily dressed, and knew her part thoroughly, delivered it very sweetly, and made a quaint and dainty little fay indeed. She, and the dresses, and the dances, and the beautiful scenery united to form a very beautiful spectacle, which afforded a delightful evening's amusement to those who are fond of such entertainment; but neither she, nor the fine dresses, nor the dances, nor the beautiful scenery, had any thing to do with Shakespeare. The piece thus played is a grand fairy spectacle: it is not Shakespeare's enchanting Comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Such a *Puck*, pleasing as he may be in himself, is no more like Shakespeare's *Puck* than he is like Jupiter Tonans. Here we had a pretty little creature, whose trim body was gayly dressed, and whose dainty limbs were snugly encased in stockinet and terminated as to the lower extremities in gaiter boots of a cerulean tint. He delivered his speeches in a sweet childish treble, and was altogether the

tenderest and most exquisitely constituted creature in the fairy band. Is this Shakespeare's "*lob* of spirits," who delighted in his proper name "*Hobgoblin*," who labored "in the quern" [a corn-mill worked by hand], and whose "shape and making" were so unlike those of his fellow fays that a stranger fairy knew him by those alone? A glance at the print of *Puck* which accompanies the old ballad of the *Mad Pranks of Robin Goodfellow*, printed in 1588, when Shakespeare was twenty-two years old, would have shown whoever put *this Puck* upon the stage, that his pretty manikin was about as unlike the *Puck* of Shakespeare's day as it was possible to make him. There he is a mixture of fay, dwarf Hercules, and Satyr; and bears a brush broom in one hand and a candle in the other. But what need of ballads and prints to guide us? Who that has read the play (and who has not), cannot call the urchin before his mind's eye as instantly as *Oberon* commanded his real presence!—a rough, knurly-limbed, fawn-faced, shock-pated little fellow,—a very Shetlander among the gossamer-winged, dainty-limbed shapes around him; and strong enough to knock all their heads together for his elvish sport. We cannot have exactly such a *Puck*; but we can be content with one "who comes to disfigure or to present" such a *Puck*.

Fairy lakes and panoramas of Fairy-land are just as much out of place as a dandy *Puck*. There is not the slightest warrant in the text for either. The scene of the fairy business is "*A Wood near Athens*;" and the only changes are from one part to "*Another part of the Wood*." *Pas seuls*, shawl dances, and the people who dance them, are no less foreign to the design of Shakespeare; and equally so is the turning of a part of *Oberon's* soliloquy into a duet, to be sung with a blue fairy who comes in for the purpose waving her wand, and goes out continuing the process. And, by the way, why are all stage fairies similarly armed and equally

constant in the use of the weapon? Pray what is the purpose of all this violent stirring up of the atmosphere? It is difficult to discover, except that it perpetuates a time-honored stage conventionality.

The text gives no hint of any of these things. That tells of fairy gambols and pranks which form a part of the movement of the play. Shakespeare brings on the stage just such fairies as Mary Arden had told him of when he stood at her knee, like any other mortal child; she, mother though she was, not dreaming the while, as her sweet Will looked up in her face, that she had borne and was nurturing one who was to be the delight of all nations, the greatest pride of the greatest race among the peoples of the earth, the noblest intellect the world's history should tell of. It is the fairies of his nursery hours which Shakespeare has idealized in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: such fairies as half Stratford believed were dancing in Sir Thomas Lucy's park every moonlight night; and these flit about the wood near Athens, make lovers' quarrels and make them up again in mere mischief, and dance and sing for themselves, and not to display their skill to others. There is nothing there of fairy lakes and panoramas, and people tying themselves and each other up in rose-colored shawls while they stand with infinite pain upon the extremity of one toe, and untying themselves by standing on the other. True, there have been fairy ballets composed in which there are *pas* of all kinds; but in those, motion, the dance, is the medium of expression. It is not so in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Nothing is there set down to be performed which has not to do with the progress of the piece; and to arrest that for the movement of a panorama or the evolutions of a ballet, is to stifle Shakespeare with a paint-brush, and to trample poetry under foot with *entrechats* and bore it through and through with *pirouettes*.

Shakespeare has preserved a unity in this fanciful composition, which the spectacle-making managers only mar by changing the last scene to Fairy-land. It is to be present at the wedding of *Theseus* and *Hyppolita* that *Oberon* and *Titania* have left Fairy-land and come to Athens, as we learn from their mutual reproaches at their first meeting ; and the events which form the movement of the three progressive acts of the play, the second, third and fourth, are but the fruit of accident and mischief. The fifth Act, like the *finale* of a finely-wrought musical composition, placidly resumes the theme which was announced at its commencement, and simply blends with it the counter-theme with which it has been intricately worked up during the body of the piece. The poet ends the fairy freaks which have harassed the human mortals through this dream, by turning the tormentors into benefactors, and bringing them into the house to bless the place and the children born of the marriages celebrated on that night. After the grotesque fun and broad humor of the interlude, the dream resumes its fanciful and graceful form, and fades upon the mind, a troop of shadowy figures, singing benisons.

The music which Mendelssohn has written for this exquisite work of genius, is in its intrinsic beauty and its skilful adaptation as near the perfection and power of genius, as the production of mere talent, taste, and acquired resource can ever be. Some years ago, when such a suspicion had never, to my knowledge, been uttered, I ventured the assertion that Mendelssohn was entirely wanting in original, creative genius, and extended the same judgment to Spohr. I am no longer left alone in this opinion. To neither of these composers are we indebted for any new form of musical thought. Their works display learning, labor, taste, skill, and, in the case of Mendelssohn particularly, an unusual command of all the resources of the art ; but we

look in vain through their compositions for the fruits of that gift which we call inspiration ; we hear no strain which, had they not been born, might not have been conceived by other minds. The music of neither is characteristic in its elements, though both have peculiarities by which we recognize their compositions : but these are peculiarities of treatment, handling,—not of original conception.

The overture, the march and the dances, written by Mendelssohn for this play, are the finest productions of his pen. It is paying them the highest possible compliment to say that they are thoroughly informed with the spirit of Shakespeare's poetry. The same may be said of all the music which the German composer has written to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. But as to a part of it, there is a great æsthetic error, which however has not to do with its intrinsic merits, and for which the fashion of the stage and not the composer is accountable.—In many passages the thoughts of the musical composer and the poet are heard together. This is false Art. The mingling of two forms of expression is inadmissible, because it must be fatal to the full and just effect which properly belongs to either. Let Music or Poetry take possession of our souls ; but do not call upon our emotions to serve the bidding of two masters. The painter might far more consistently attempt to unite the sculptor's art with his, by bringing his figures into relief, or the sculptor seek to heighten the relief of his work by deepening the shadows with paint. If verse be the poet's medium of expression, let Poetry alone express his thought ; if musical sounds, let Music alone do his bidding. We may alternate our enjoyment of the two arts, as in the case of illustrated poems, or music interspersed with verse—but if both claim our attention at the same time, we are under the dominion of neither, and all unity of effect is destroyed.



Dramatic poetry can receive no more aid from Music, than dramatic music can receive from Poetry. All that the musician can do for the dramatist is to embellish his work : all that the poet can accomplish for the musician is to furnish him with dramatic situations, and suggestive thoughts, of which his music is to be the sole exponent, to the entire disregard of all except the mere dramatic conception of the poet ; whose words, as words, are in this case to be considered the mere vehicles of musical sounds. Any mingling of the offices of Poet (using the word in its limited sense) and Musician, effects only the confounding, confusing, and consequent destruction of both.

In truth, Music and Poetry more than any two other Arts must be enjoyed apart ; because they both appeal to the mind through the same sense,—the ear, which, otherwise, is called upon to receive at the same time two impressions, one transmitting thought, the other awakening emotion. The consequence of the attempt to do this, is distraction both of mind and sense, as all who have been subjected to it must have noticed. In a play, where words are the vehicles of thought and expression, music may properly precede or follow the Acts, or be interspersed through the poetry, but cannot properly accompany it : in an opera, where music is the medium of expression, we want words only for the situation or emotion which they furnish, as a subject to the composer, and for the purposes of articulation. He who needs, or can suffer the music of Mendelssohn while he is listening to the verse of Shakespeare, or who longs to hear the verse of Romani while he is enjoying the music of Bellini, might with greater propriety ask that St. Luke's narrative should be plainly written across the face of Raphael's *Transfiguration*, so that he might enjoy the story and the picture together, or complain that Virgil did not write his description of Venus appearing to Æneas

with such an arrangement of his lines that they would present the form of the beauty they described. No,—neither Music, Painting, Sculpture, nor Poetry will accept divided homage. Art, like *Falstaff's* sack, must be “simple, of itself.” a draught not of mingled pleasures; but pure,—unmixed even with kindred delights.

#### ACT I. SCENE 1.

“*Thes.* Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;  
 Know of your youth, examine well your blood,  
 Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,  
 You can endure the livery of a nun,  
 For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,  
 To live a barren sister all your life,  
 Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.  
 Thrice blessed they, that master so their blood,  
 To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;  
 But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,  
 Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,  
 Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness.”

“But earthlier happy is the rose distilled.” Pope and Johnson proposed to read “*earlier* happy,” and Steevens “*earthly* happy.” Capell reads “*earthly happier*,” and Mr. Knight without his usual deference to the original text, and regard for the most obvious meaning, adopts the latter reading, on the ground that “*earthlier* happie,” the reading of the first folio and the quartos, might have been misprinted for “*earthlie* happier.” So it might; but what need of supposing a misprint? ‘*Earthly*’ is a good adjective, and ‘*earthlier*’ is its proper comparative. *Theseus* has just described a religious state which makes those who adopt it “thrice blessed.” He then speaks of another state, which confers another kind of happiness. Each ensures happiness, but happiness of a different nature. When

he discriminates between the two, he speaks, not of their degrees of happiness, but of their kind. The latter is a happiness earthlier, that is, more consistent with the natural instincts of the human heart, than the former. 'Earthly happier,' makes the distinction, or at least the comparison, one of degree. It perverts the sense, or substitutes a new one, and one not so natural and Shakesperian; and gives us, besides, an awkward new phrase for a graceful old one. Why make it?

[Since the foregoing remarks were written, Mr. Collier's folio has appeared with the reading 'earthly, happier' in this passage. It is almost needless to notice it; for a liberty with the text which is refused to the reasons of such men as Capell and Mr. Knight, can surely derive no authority from the *ipse dixit* of a man of whom we know nothing.

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"Helena.                      And for this intelligence,  
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense."

Mr. Collier thinks that his folio singularly improves this passage by reading,

"And for this intelligence,  
If I have thanks, it is *dear recompense*."

Whether or not the change is an improvement, is a matter of taste; but whether a change is needed, is not a matter of opinion. The words of the original text are susceptible of more than one interpretation; but surely the most obvious one is the best. Steevens thus states it:—"it is a dear expense':] *i. e.* it will *cost him much* (be a severe constraint on his feelings) to make even so slight a return for my communication."

## SCENE 2.

"*Bottom*. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point."

One only of the characters among the human mortals in this play is very strongly marked. Who but *Bottom*, the life and soul of the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe*! Many have been inclined to look upon *Bottom* only as a stolid lout; and he has even been presented as such with success upon the stage. The conception is directly at variance with Shakespeare's delineation of the character.

Watch *Bottom*, and see that from the time he enters until he disappears, he not only claims to be, but is, the man of men, the Agamemnon of the "rude mechanicals" of Athens. No sooner is the subject of the play opened, than he instantly assumes the direction of it, which is acquiesced in by his fellows, as a matter of course. He tells *Peter Quince* what to do, and *Peter* does it. He has the best part assigned to him; but the bottomless stomach of his vanity claims every character. He wants the lion's part literally as well as metaphorically. But there is some reason for all this besides his vanity: he is the best among them, and they know it. He has impressed them with his superiority, and has a moral as well as a mental influence upon them. *Peter Quince*, who is, after a clownish fashion, a shrewd, politic fellow, sees the necessity for conciliating him, and flatters him into self-complacent satisfaction, by telling him that "*Pyramus* is a sweet-faced man; a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day, a most lovely, gentlemanlike man; therefore, you must needs play *Pyramus*." The green-room and the world before the curtain see many a like manœuvre now-a-days. *Bottom* criticises boldly at the rehearsal; and his cri-

ticisms are received with deference. When *Snug*, the Joiner, is at his wit's end about bringing in a wall, he appeals instantly to *Bottom*, who, with sublime readiness of resource, instantly affords the needful counsel. In this very Scene, after his "translation," he says to *Titania* : "to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days. The more the pity that some honest neighbors will not make them friends." It is no idiotic lout who utters this, and who makes those humorous replies to *Moth*, *Mustard-seed*, *Pease-blossom* and *Cobweb*, and who, on coming to himself, shrinks from saying to himself what he thought he was, and what he thought he had upon his head. And when *Peter Quince* is forced to the sad conclusion that "out of doubt he is transported," see the consternation of the whole company ! "The play goes not forward," says *Flute* the Bellows Mender. "It is not possible ;" replies *Quince*, "you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge *Pyramus* but he ;" and *Flute* soon after bewails the sixpence a day (quite a salary in Shakespeare's time,) which "Bully *Bottom* " has lost by his asinine transformation. Finally, when *Bottom* comes in upon them, no more of a donkey than he had ever been, hear *Peter Quince's* delighted exclamation : "*Bottom* !—O most courageous day ! O most happy hour !" The shrewd fellow has a double interest in the restoration of his leading actor ; for good *Peter*, beyond a question, is the author of that play of *Pyramus and Thisbe* ;—it peeps out on all occasions.

No,—*Bottom* is no stupid lout. He is a compound of profound ignorance and omnivorous conceit ; but these are tempered by good nature, decision of character, and some mother wit. That which gives him his individuality, does not depend upon his want of education, his position, or his calling. All the schools of Athens could not have reasoned it out of him ; and all the gold of *Croesus* would have made

him but a gilded *Bottom* after all. The race of *Bottoms* did not become extinct with *Nick* ; nor have we reason to believe he was Nicholas the First. His descendants have not unfrequently appeared among the gifted intellects of the world. When Goldsmith, jealous of the attention which a dancing monkey attracted in a coffee-house, said, "I can do that as well," and was about to attempt it, he was but playing *Bottom*. As Mr. Burton renders the character, its traits are brought out with a delicate and masterly hand: its humor is exquisite. But it is not well for any of us to laugh too much at it : it is not prudent ; for somebody may be by who knows us better than we know ourselves.

#### ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Fairy*. The cowslips tall her pensioners be ;  
In their gold coats, spots you see," &c.

Mr. Collier's folio alters "tall" to *all* and "coats" to *cups* ; and Mr. Dyce says, that though the first of these alterations is more than questionable (and he performs well the needless task of showing that it is utterly inadmissible) the second may be right. If Mr. Dyce means to say that Shakespeare, with propriety, *might* have written *cups* for "coats," few will be inclined to disagree with him. But when we have the best evidence that Shakespeare wrote "coats," and none at all that he wrote *cups* ; and when the first word is not only comprehensible but pertinent, why say that it "*may* be right" to change it to—any thing ? It is to be regretted when a man of Mr. Dyce's position gives even a *quasi* sanction to an unnecessary change in the original text of Shakespeare.

"*Puck*. Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,  
And tailor cries, and falls into a cough ;  
And then the whole quire hold their hips and loffe,  
A waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear  
A merrier hour was never wasted there."

I never could understand why the "wisest aunt" in this most rollicking and exuberantly humorous description should cry "tailor" when she misses her seat ; and have found no commentary to enlighten me. Does the word refer to her position when she falls, being like that of a tailor ? It can hardly be that the allusion is to the first syllable of the word.

[I find in the *Variorum* Edition, a note by Johnson, in which he refers this expression to the position of the person falling. But even the support of an identical prior conjecture does not confirm me in attributing this sense to the word. There was evidently a great joke hid in it ; and what joke would there be, even for such a circle, in one of them falling into the position of a tailor ? Neither Hamner nor Warburton know of such a customary jest under such circumstances ; for they read,—“and *rails* or cries.”

## SCENE 2.

With what propriety is there a new scene made at the entrance of *Oberon* and *Titania*, who merely come upon *Puck* and the fairy as they are talking ? In the original, the first Scene closes at the subsequent separation of *Puck* and *Oberon*. There is neither authority nor reason for the change.

"*Titan.* And on old Hyem's chin and icy crown,  
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds  
Is, as in mockery set."

Evidently we should read, "Hyem's *thin* and icy crown," as Tyrwhitt and Mr. Dyce have suggested. What was a chaplet doing on old Hyem's *chin*? How did it get there; and when it got there, how did it stay there?

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"*Oberon.* ———Thou remember'st  
Since once I sat upon a promontory,  
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath  
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,  
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres  
To hear the sea maid's music."

How strangely felicitous the choice of epithet by Shakespeare! and yet there is conveyed, I know not how, an impression that the epithets are not chosen, but rise spontaneously with the thought. He says the maid uttered "dulcet and harmonious breath." Not 'notes,' as any other poet would have said, but "breath;" as if the marvellous creature exhaled music; as if from her lovely parted lips nothing could come which did not take from them a form of beauty. Let any one put 'notes' or 'tones' in the place of "breath," in this line, and see how the bloom on its rich beauty vanishes. The passage is beautiful, charmingly beautiful, whichever word is there; but take away the word which Shakespeare wrote, and that which is exquisite, ethereal, and really transcendent in its beauty is gone, utterly and hopelessly.

How much, too, is there in the alliteration of the line,

"In maiden meditation fancy-free."



The alliteration, it may be said, adds nothing to the thought. True ; but it does add to its charm. Without it, the line would not be that which always flashes on the memory when we think of a maiden who has lived till now with the depths of her heart untroubled.

## ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Her.* Hate me! wherefore! O me, what newes my Love!"

Thus the original, which Mr. Collier's margins have, plausibly enough, changed to "what *means* my love?" But it is by no means certain that any variation from the original is needed. This is *Hermia's* first interview with her former lover since *Puck's* application of the flower to his eyes ; and she may well express surprise at the novelty of his declaration that he hates her.

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"*Hel.* So with two seeming bodies but one heart ;  
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,  
Due but to one and crowned with one crest."

This heraldic allusion has puzzled many. Monck Mason's solution, which is approved by Knight, is this,—

"Every branch of a family is called a house ; and none but the first of the first house can bear the arms of the family without some distinction ; two of the first, therefore, means two coats of the first house, which are properly due but to one."

This might be all very well as far as it goes, but it leaves the line "Due but to one and *crowned with one crest*" unaccounted for. The simile is evidently intended to

strengthen the idea of the perfect union of the two girls, which, according to Mason's explanation, it fails to do. The trouble seems to arise from making the word "first" an heraldic term. 'First,' 'second,' &c., are used in heraldry either as denoting a house, or as indicating a tint already mentioned in blazoning a shield; but here 'first' is used in its ordinary sense, and refers to the former line, as Douce has pointed out. *Helena* says that she and *Hermia* had two bodies but one heart; and "two of the first,"—that is, two bodies, "due but to one,"—that is, one soul, like coats in heraldry, when the bearings of two families are united to make the arms of the one which springs from them, in which case they are crowned with one crest.

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"*Oberon*. Turns into yellow gold his salt, green streams,"

This is always printed "salt-green streams" making a compound adjective of—salt-green. What sort of green is a salt-green? Is salt green at all? Read,—“salt, green streams.”

#### ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Oberon*. Her dotage now I do begin to pity;  
For, meeting her of late, behind the wood,  
Seeking sweet savours for this hateful fool," &c.

Mr. Dyce would read, with one of the quartos,

"Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool."

because "*Titania* was seeking flowers for *Bottom* to wear as favours." But surely Mr. Dyce must have forgotten that

"savours," the word in the authentic folio, is supported by the fact that *Bottom* in this Scene expresses a wish for the "sweet savour" of a honey bag, and that *Titania* begs him to sit that she may "stick musk roses" in his head, and in a previous Scene thus commands her attendants:

"Feed him with apricocks, and dewberries,  
With purple grapes, green figs and mulberries;  
The honey bags steal from the humble bees," &c.

The Queen of the Fairies was evidently seeking "sweet savours," and not "sweet favours," for her hirsute love.

## ACT V. SCENE I.

"*Then* Lovers, and madmen, have such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever comprehends.  
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,  
Are of imagination all compact:  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold:  
That is the madman: the lover, all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:  
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And, as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation, and a name.  
Such tricks hath strong imagination,  
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,  
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;  
Or in the night, imagining some fear,  
How easy, is a bush suppos'd a bear!"

How strange that this sublimely beautiful passage should have such a "lame and impotent conclusion." To think of coming down from,

"the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name,

to such obvious and smile provoking common-place as,

"Or, in the night, imagining some fear,  
How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear."

I do not believe that the last two lines of the speech are genuine. Imagination "imagining some fear," cannot be Shakespeare's. The two preceding lines are doubtless his, and close the speech appropriately, with a clear and conclusive distinction between the apprehension and comprehension of excited imagination,—the very subject of the remarks of *Theseus*. Where, indeed, in the whole range of metaphysical writing is the difference between the two acts so clearly stated and so forcibly illustrated! And would Shakespeare, after reaching the climax of his thought, fall into this needless common-place? Besides, what meaning has "or" where it now stands? "Apprehend some joy" and "comprehend some bringer of that joy," ring true; but "imagining some fear" and "bushes and bears" are poor counterfeit. I wonder that this has not been noticed. The two lines are, in my judgment, an interpolation by some player. That the original folio was partly printed from a copy which, whether Shakespeare's original manuscript or not, had been marked for stage use, is evident from the fact, that in some places the name of the performer appears in it, instead of that of the character; and it needs no proof that stage managers, and even actors, take and always have taken, the liberty of adding to, as well as subtracting from, the dramatist's work. On the title-pages of some of the plays in *Bell's British Theatre*, which are advertised as "regulated from the Prompt Book," is this notice:

"The Lines distinguished by inverted commas are omitted in the Representation; and those printed in Italics are the additions of the Theatre."

The quarto editions of Shakespeare's plays were evidently printed from actors' parts; and, as we learn from the Stationer's address in the first folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's Works, "when private friends desired a copy [of their parts] they [the actors] transcribed *what they acted*." The many erasures in Mr. Collier's folio, and the alterations for the sake of rhyme, especially at the close of Scenes and Acts, put it beyond doubt that its mutilations, changes, and interpolations, are partly due to the license of the actors on a degenerating stage.

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*Lysander.* The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung  
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp."

*Theseus.* We'll none of that: that have I told my love,  
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

*Lys.* "The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,  
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage."

*Theseus.* That is an old device; and it was play'd  
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

*Lys.* "The thrice three Muses mourning for the death  
Of learning, late deceas'd in beggary."

*Theseus.* That is some satire, keen and critical,  
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

*Lys.* "A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus,  
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth."

*Theseus.* Merry and tragical! Tedious and brief!  
That is, hot ice, and wondrous strange snow.  
How shall we find the concord of this discord!"

Thus the original folio divides this passage, making *Lysander* read the schedule and *Theseus* comment. On the quasi authority of the quartos, the whole is given to *The-*

*seus*, by which nothing is gained in propriety or effect. It is surely more probable that *Duke Theseus* would have a schedule read to him, than that he would read it aloud himself; and this is the arrangement of the authentic copy.

In the last reply of *Theseus*, the epithet "strange," applied to snow, is not only entirely inappropriate, but utterly meaningless; it is doubtless a printer's error for *seething*. Mr. Collier's folio reads "hot ice and wondrous *seething* snow."

My unknown correspondent in the lumber State does not agree with this opinion, and holds to "*strange*." "Of course," he remarks, "the idea is, that the snow, to compare with the *mirthful* and *tragical*, and *tedious* and *brief* scene, and with the *hot ice*, must be a singular kind of snow—snow resembling almost any thing else than snow—perhaps black instead of white, or seething instead of frozen—such would be *strange* snow, indeed." I respect this clinging to the original text; but still I fail to see any consistent meaning in "*strange*." It is not in any way opposed to "snow;" and reason demands that it should be. Mirth and tragedy, tediousness and brevity, heat and ice, cannot find a counter-part in strangeness and snow. "*Seething* snow" seems plainly to me the author's phrase; and the more, that it perfects an otherwise imperfect line.

---

"*Pyr.* Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;  
I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright,  
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering beams," &c.

Thus the original, with an evident misprint in the second "beams," which was corrected in the second folio to *streams*. Mr. Knight suggests that we should read,

"For by thy gracious, golden, glittering *gleams*."

Surely, who that remembers the following lines in the *Prologue* of the interlude, can doubt for a moment that *gleams* is the word ?

"Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;"

If we change the original at all, a good emendation in the second folio must yield to a better from Mr. Knight ; for the second folio, with or without MS. emendations, has no authority.

## SCENE 2.

"*Obe.* With this field-dew consecrate,  
Every fairy take his gait ;  
And each several chamber bless,  
Through this palace with sweet peace ;  
Ever shall in safety rest,  
And the owner of it blest."

"Ever shall in safety rest," is neither sense nor English, ancient or modern. There is no nominative, expressed or understood. Pope read,

"*E'er* shall *it* in safety rest ;"

but Warburton and Mr. Collier's folio in reading,

"Ever shall *it* *safely* rest,"

deviate less, in fact, as little as possible, from the original, and obtain the same sense and a smother line.

## MERCHANT OF VENICE.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Ant.* I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano ;  
A stage, where every man must play a part,  
And mine a sad one."

I do not know that it has been before remarked, that to the dignity of *Antonio's* character there is added a tinge of moody, tender melancholy, which yet stops short of morbidness or affectation, and which adds much to the interest awakened in us by his generous friendship and the trying circumstances in which his noble kindness places him. This sadness, as well as the gentleness and open sincerity of his character, appears in the letter in which he announces his misfortune to *Bassanio*,—one of the finest instances of the pathos of simplicity that exists in literature.

"Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure : if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter."

No commentator has shown such an utter want of sympathy with the finest thoughts and the finest characters in





Shakespeare's works, as that one who has, naturally therefore, assumed the most patronizing tone in speaking of them,—Warburton. It would have been strange indeed, had he appreciated so noble, and yet so delicately drawn a character as *Antonio*; and we are not surprised to hear him call this prince of commerce “a plain, reserved, *parsimonious* merchant.” Warburton says this in a note which he writes, to prove that when *Shylock* calls *Antonio* “a bankrupt, a prodigal who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto,” he should call him, “a bankrupt *for* a prodigal” —i. e. for *Bassanio*. Since the critic could not feel the noble generosity of *Antonio's* nature, it is gratifying to see so pitiable a blunder in criticism made the occasion of showing his want of sympathy.

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“*Grat.* There are a sort of men whose visages  
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond;  
And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
With purpose to be dressed in an opinion  
Of wisdom, gravity,” &c.

Without good assurance of the fact, it would hardly be believed that a man of common sense would think it necessary deliberately to perpetrate a note on this passage for the purpose of defining “a wilful stillness” as ‘an obstinate silence.’ Yet it is unfortunately true that Malone did so; as any one may see in the *Variorum* Shakespeare. And in the third scene of this Act, when *Bassanio*, to prevent *Antonio* from sealing the bond asked for by the Jew, says,

“You shall not seal to such a bond for me;  
I'll rather dwell in my necessity,”

Dr. Johnson remarks, with timid solemnity, that “to dwell,

in this place seems to mean the same as to continue." On reading such a note as this, we use *Hamlet's* phrase,—

"Seems, Madam ! nay it is ; I know not seems."

Why did not the Doctor deliberately assure us that "my necessity" means 'my need ?' It would not have been one whit more superfluous. But in *King Lear*, Johnson outdoes himself. In that passage of bitter ironical reproach in the fourth Scene of the second Act, when *Lear*, supposing himself to address *Goneril*, says,

"Dear daughter, I confess that I am old ;  
Age is unnecessary : On my knees I beg  
That you'll vouch safe me raiment, bed, and food,"

how cutting is the irony, how grand and crushing the rebuke of her ingratitude conveyed in the seemingly humble admission that "age is unnecessary,"—that the old are needless and a burden ! Will it be believed, Dr. Johnson, the great Dr. Johnson, makes this note upon the passage !—

"Age is *unnecessary* :] *i. e.* Old age has few wants."

But Thomas Tyrwhitt almost rivals 'the great moralist.' —He remarks,

"Unnecessary, in *Lear's* speech, I believe means—*in want of necessities, unable to procure them.*"

The obvious and pregnant significance of the passage seems in danger of being extinguished for readers so near 'the Augustan age of English literature,' when Steevens steps in and nearly saves it, by venturing to suggest that "'Age is unnecessary,' may mean, *old people are useless.*"

Now, there must be a reason for the utterance of such



platitudes as these, and a thousand others which deform the page of the *Variorum* Shakespeare, by men of learning and ability. It is in vain to urge that on account of the labors of these very men we now understand the phraseology of Shakespeare's works ; for among my own acquaintance I know a score of men of all grades of intelligence and education, who have never seen a comment or a criticism on Shakespeare, never looked at a glossary, who read him and have read him for years with delight and understanding, and who would scout such editing as this, as sheer impertinence ; and so, in truth, it is. I find the reason for these labored explanations of lucid passages, and the equally labored confusion of others equally clear, in the fact, that the second-hand classic taste, the artificial and meagre phraseology, and the comparatively precise, straitened, tame and barren style of thought in the last century, was so unkindred with the genius of Shakespeare and his age,—the golden age of English letters—that passages which flashed their meaning upon the minds of his contemporary readers, and which are as instantly apprehended by the minds of this century,—more kindred with him than the last—were “caviare” to Popes, Warburtons, Hammers, Johnsons, Malones, and Steevenses and their contemporaries.

## SCENE 3.

“*Shy.* The skilful shepherd peel'd me certain wands.”

“*Shy.* And spat upon my Jewish gaberdine.”

C. Knight gives *pill'd* for “peel'd” and *spet* for “spat,” saying that these were the received orthographies of Shakespeare's time. So, also, Mr. Dyce \* censures Mr. Collier and

\* Remarks on Mr. J. P. Collier's and Mr. C. Knight's Editions of Shakespeare, p. 53.

Mr. Knight for giving 'misconstrued' instead of "misconster'd" in Act II. Sc. 2 of this play, and for modernizing the same word in other passages,—giving as a reason that "these forms were common in our early writers." True; but why retain the spelling of these words when that of all others is changed? Why change the others? Why should we lose the physiognomy of Shakespeare's words? Who would read a modernized Spenser? The orthography which we have now in Shakespeare is neither his nor ours; but that of a time with which we have little sympathy and he had less. Until we have Shakespeare as nearly as possible in the exact words and letters which he left us, or would have left us had he edited his own works, we shall not enjoy, or appreciate him exactly as we otherwise should.

#### ACT II. SCENE 2.

"*Laun.* O heavens! this is my true begotten father, who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not:—I will try confusions with him."

Thus the original folio and one of the early quartos; and yet all modern editions,—every edition, indeed, issued in the last century and a half, except Theobald's and Capell's, read, "I will try *conclusions* with him." The only support which this reading has, is that it appears in one of the early quartos; which amounts to little in any case, and against the authentic copy, and the obvious sense of the passage, is worthless. How natural that *Launcelot* should try "confusions" with his "true begotten father!" He certainly meant *conclusions*; and so there is reason to believe that *Bottom*, when he said he would "aggravate" his voice, meant that he would *modulate* it; and that *Dogberry*, when he told *Leonato* that the watch had "comprehended

two aspicuous persons" meant—not exactly what he said. How closely Shakespeare's editors must be watched, lest they steal away from us a part of the delight he has bequeathed to us.

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"*Gobbo*. Your worship's friend and Launcelot.

*Laun*. But I pray you *ergo*, old man, *ergo*, I beseech you, talk you of young master Launcelot."

Mr. Knight supposes old *Gobbo's* reply to have reference to himself, like *Costard's* answer,—“your servant and *Costard*,” in *Love's Labors Lost*. Surely not. *Launcelot* whimsically takes his father to task for disrespect to himself—*Launcelot*; and says, in reply to old *Gobbo's* statement of their condition, “Well, let his father be what he will, we talk of young master *Launcelot*.” The father replies, deprecatingly, but still unable to dub his son a gentleman, “your worship's friend and *Launcelot*,” *i. e.*—‘Aye, we speak of *Launcelot*, your worship's friend.’ To this, *Launcelot*, who evidently, like the *Gravedigger* in *Hamlet*, understands, after a fashion, the Latin word he uses, rejoins, “But I pray you *ergo*, I beseech you, *ergo*, talk you of young master *Launcelot*,” *i. e.*—‘And therefore, because I am your worship and he is my friend, you should speak of him as *Master Launcelot*.’ Mr. Knight is evidently right in retaining the full point of the old copies, in place of the mark of interrogation substituted by the modern editors.

### ACT III. SCENE 2.

“*Bass*. Look on beauty,  
And you shall see 'tis purchas'd by the weight;  
Which therein works a miracle in nature,

Making them lightest that wear most of it:  
 So are those crisped snaky golden locks,  
 Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,  
 Upon supposed fairness, often known  
 To be the dowry of a second head,—  
 The scull that bred them, in the sepulchra.  
 Thus ornament is but the guiled shore  
 To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf  
 Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,  
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on  
 To entrap the wisest."

The last sentence in this passage has made trouble enough;—needlessly in my poor judgment. It seems to have been universally supposed by the editors, that to make ornament "the beauteous scarf veiling an Indian *beauty*," is inconsistent with the likening it to "the guiled shore to a most dangerous sea;" indeed Mr. Collier remarks, in his late *Notes and Emendations*, that "'beauty' was obviously the very converse of what the poet intended." For this reason Hanmer read,

"the beauteous scarf  
 Veiling an Indian *dowdy*;"

and Mr. Singer has recently proposed,

"the beauteous scarf  
 Veiling an Indian *gipsy*;"

and Mr. Collier's folio corrector, with other conjecturers,

"the beauteous scarf  
 Veiling an Indian: beauty in a word,  
 The seeming truth that cunning times put on," &c.

It is evidently taken for granted by the editors, that the "beauteous scarf" must veil something which otherwise

would be unattractive. Far from it : it must be "dangerous." The fitness of the word "Indian" is also lost sight of in all these conjectures. Why should this poor dowdy or gipsy, to whom a dangerous sea is likened, be an Indian ? The original text says, plainly enough, just what Shakespeare meant. Did the editors never hear of the opinion, universal in Shakespeare's day, and very general now, that a certain plague, unnamable to ears polite, was not known in the civilized world until it was brought to Spain in the beginning of the sixteenth century by those who had made easy conquests of the Indian beauties in newly discovered America ? Well indeed might the "beauteous scarf veiling an *Indian beauty*," be likened to "the guiled shore to a *most dangerous sea*,"—and *vice versa*.

Mr. Collier's folio, in reading "guiling shore" for "guiled shore," only rids the text of a Shakespearian peculiarity.

---

*Por.* —an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd:  
 Happy in this, she is not yet so old  
 But she may learn; happier than this,  
 She is not bred so dull but she can learn;  
 Happiest of all, is that her gentle spirit  
 Commits itself to yours to be directed."

Mr. Collier's folio reads, with obvious propriety,

"Happiest of all, in that her gentle spirit," &c.

*Portia* says first, that she is "happy in this," that she is yet not so old but she may learn," &c. ; which is valent to—'happy in that she is not so old,' &c. "Happiest of all, is that her gentle spirit," is not sense. The correction of the typographical mistake of one letter restores sense, and preserves the form of expression in the con-

text. There can hardly be a doubt that Shakespeare wrote, in the second instance, "happier *in* this," instead of "happier than this;" but as the text of the first folio gives a good sense, it is unsafe to change it.

ACT V. SCENE 1.

"*Lor.* —look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold."

Mr. Collier abandons "pattens," the reading of the original and one of the quartos, although it is supported by that of the other quarto—"pattents," to follow the misprint, or the prosaic alteration of the word in the second folio—"pat-terns." The line would become almost worthless without "patines."

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"*Por.* Peace! how the moon sleeps with Endymion,  
And would not be awak'd! [*Music ceases.*"]

Thus the original, which has been changed to "Peace, *hoa!* the moon sleeps," &c. But Mr. Collier's folio suggests *now* for "how," which is much nearer the original in the trace of the letters, and gives at least as good a sense, and, in my judgment, a better. I would read :

"Peace! now the moon sleeps with Endymion,  
And would not be awak'd!"

---

"*Ner.* And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,  
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,  
In lieu of this, last night did lie with me."



Strange that the misprint here should not have attracted attention. "In lieu of *this*?" In lieu of what? The ring? Irrespective of the tameness and want of point in such an assertion, it is not true, in the sense in which *Nerissa* addresses it to *Gratiano*; for she had had the ring on her finger ever since dinner time on the previous day; and although she had not been to bed during the "last night" which she speaks of, *Gratiano* did not know it. Read:

"the doctor's clerk,  
In lieu of *thee*, last night did lie with me."

---

In

"*Grat.* Why this is like the mending of highways  
In summer, where the ways are fair enough."

There can be hardly a doubt that Shakespeare wrote,

"In summer, *when* the ways are fair enough,"

as one of the correctors of Mr. Collier's folio conjectured.

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"*Grat.* Well, while I live, I'll fear no other thing  
So sore as keeping safe *Nerissa's* ring."

A correspondent in *Notes and Queries*, No. 167, p. 45, asks whether *Gratiano* does not make "a covert allusion to the story first told by Poggio in his *Facetiæ*, then by Ariosto, then by Rabelais, then by La Fontaine, and finally by Prior in his *Hans Carvel*." The query seems quite superfluous. There is surely little covertness in the allusion;

and to understand it, a knowledge of Poggio's story is by no means necessary.

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One chief and peculiar charm in the *Merchant of Venice*, is the gentle, placid beauty of the last Act, in which the excited passions of the fourth Act, where Comedy treads so closely upon the heels of Tragedy, subside, and are lulled into sweet repose by the soothing influences of those love passages between the three pairs of lovers in *Portia's* garden;—that enchanted garden, canopied by a sky “inlaid with patines of bright gold,” and the air in which is filled with the music of orbs, “still quiring to the young-eye'd cherubins.” But convenience, or a modest supposition that Shakespeare did not understand stage effect as well as we do now-a-days, has determined that this Act is a superfluity; and it is now remorselessly amputated,—the necessary explanation between *Portia* and *Nerissa* and their husbands being huddled up at the close of the fourth Act, and the curtain dropping upon the discomfited malice of *Shylock*, instead of the tender joy which filled the hearts of those who went to rest in Belmont! For such a barbarous procrusteanism there is no imaginable excuse. The fact that the last part of the Scene contains certain expressions which are not fit for the ears of modern audiences, is no justification for this mutilation of the dramatic design of the author. Let the text be pruned of these excrescences; but let them not be made the excuse for lopping off one of the finest members of the play,—one of the most beautiful productions of Shakespeare's genius.

## AS YOU LIKE IT.

For the delicacy of its wit, the pregnant quaintness of its humor, the keenness of its satire, and, above all, the profound and subtle knowledge of human nature shown in the moulding of its characters, this sylvan comedy is remarkable even among the plays of Shakespeare. To these traits it adds a healthy, rural, inartificial air, which is grateful to pure sympathies. Its events pass amid trees and rocks and running brooks ; and its characters show the influence of their surroundings. They do not talk like sentimental citizens on an excursion, determined to be becomingly romantic ; but they drink in wholesome exhilaration from the open air, and yet do not lack that sober thoughtfulness proper to those who dwell beneath "the shade of melancholy boughs." We find in no other language so fresh and true a picture of sylvan life. The English boasts one glorious gallery of views equal to it :—the forest scenes in *Ivanhoe*. The very songs scattered through the play seem to be the spontaneous utterance of frank yet thoughtful natures, under the spell of forest influences.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

*"Oliver. And what wilt thou do, beg, when that is spent!"*

**"This is pointed thus in all the editions :**

"And what wilt thou do! beg, when that is spent."

a punctuation which does not bring out the sense of the question. *Oliver* obviously does not need to ask *Orlando* what he will do when he gets the thousand crowns, but what he will do when they are spent. The question is double; and in their natural order the queries would stand thus:

"And what wilt thou do when that is spent! beg!"

But the two are united by making the last parenthetical in the first; and there should therefore be no interrogation point except at the close of the whole sentence.

On the very threshold of the drama we have a remarkable instance of the nice and intuitive discrimination of Shakespeare in the delineation of a secondary character. *Oliver*, the elder brother of *Orlando*, would be drawn by any but a great master of the human heart, as an unmitigated villain; and so, indeed, he is invariably misrepresented on the stage. *Oliver*, speaking of *Orlando* in the first Scene, says:—

"I hope I shall see an end of him; for my soul, yet I know not why—  
hates nothing more than he."

Here the speech closes, on the stage: but Shakespeare makes *Oliver* go on, and say of his young brother:—

"Yet he's gentle; never schooled, and yet learned; full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved; and, indeed so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I

am altogether misprised. But it shall not be so, long; this wrestler shall clear all: nothing remains, but that I kindle the boy thither, which now I'll go about."

With what wonderful knowledge is here depicted the effect of moral excellence upon a man envious in temper and domineering in spirit, yet capable of appreciating that which is good in others, and even of desiring it for himself! He is not a mere brutal, grasping elder brother: but being somewhat morose and moody in his disposition, he first envied and then disliked the youth who, although his inferior in position, is so much in the heart of the world, and especially of his own people, that he himself is altogether misprised. The very moody disposition which makes him less popular than his younger brother, led him to nourish this envious dislike, till it became at length the bitter hate which he shows in the first Scene of the play. Had *Oliver* been less appreciative of the good in others, and less capable of it himself, he would not have turned so bitterly against *Orlando*. It is quite true to nature that such a man should be overcome entirely, and at once, by the subsequent generosity of his brother, and instantly subdued by simple, earnest *Celia*. But his sudden yielding to sweet and noble influences is not consistent with the character of the coarse, unmitigated villain whom we see upon the stage, and who is the monstrous product, not of Shakespeare, but of those who garble Shakespeare's text.

I notice this, because it is an example of the wrong done to Shakespeare as a dramatist by the preparers of the acting copies of his plays; a wrong from which this comedy especially has suffered. Shakespeare was not only the greatest of poets, but an actor, and the successful manager of a theatre; and it is more than probable that he knew, not only what was necessary to the development of his conceptions of character, but what was suited to the tastes

of a promiscuous audience. This appears to have been forgotten for about two centuries past.

## SCENE 2.

"*Le Beau*. Fair princess, you have lost much good sport.  
*Celia*. Sport! Of what colour!"

It seemed to me at first quite probable, as Mr. Collier's folio suggests, that *Le Beau* told the princesses, in his affected way, that they had "lost much good *spo't*" (sport), and that this prompted *Cecilia* to ask, "*Spot?* of what color?" But upon reflection, the emendation appears to be one of those made points, called in theatrical cant, 'gags,' upon which actors venture successfully sometimes, but so rarely, that it is to be desired that they should always fail. We would gladly forego the few happy hits, if the sacrifice could secure us from the multitudinous misses.

## SCENE 3.

"*Cel*. But is all this for thy father!  
*Ros*. No, some of it is for my child's father."

This, the reading of the original, has been changed by Rowe and Mr. Knight to "for my *father's child*." The meaning of the original is obviously, as Theobald says, "for him whom I hope to marry, and who will be the father of my children." Of this, Coleridge says, "Who can doubt that it is a mistake for 'my father's child,' meaning herself? According to Theobald's note, a most indelicate anticipation is put into the mouth of *Rosalind* without

reason." This opinion Mr. Knight indorses, with the addition that the thought is "most forced and unnatural."

It certainly is pleasant to agree with Coleridge and Mr. Knight, and it may be presuming to differ from them ; but I cannot sympathize with the tone of their criticism on this passage, or agree with their conclusions in regard to it. *Rosalind*, as the whole context shows, is evidently thinking of *Orlando*, whom she already loves fixedly. *Rosalind* is no prude in spirit,—none of Shakespeare's fine women are,—and she speaks with the freedom with which women spoke in the days of Elizabeth. When this Scene opens, she has evidently been long brooding over her love and her thoughts have travelled far into the future. She has fancied herself *Orlando's* loving wife and the mother of his children ;—what man, what truly pure woman, with a woman's instincts and affections undistorted and unperverted, will not honor her and love her for it ! *Rosalind* was no missy girl, ignorant of the relations of her sex to the other, or affecting an ignorance to hide prurient knowledge. She was an honest-hearted, sensible woman, with all the instincts and impulses of her sex active within her ; and she, speaking in the tone of those trained in Shakespeare's time, is not ashamed to say to her cousin, who seems but her other self, that to be the mother of *Orlando's* child is the longed-for sum of her earthly happiness.

But let us see if *Rosalind*, in subsequent unquestioned passages of the play, do not indulge in thoughts far more indelicate, and speeches more gross, than this utterance of a woman's longing which so shocks Coleridge and Mr. Knight. A moment afterward, when *Celia* tells her to "hem away" the burrs in her heart, she replies :

"I would try : if I could cry hem, and have him."

In Act IV. Sc. 1. *Orlando* asks,

"Who could be out, [of matter for conversation] being before his beloved mistress!"

*Rosalind* replies, with a gross perversion of his phrase,

"Marry, that should you, if I were your mistress; or I should think *my honesty ranker than my wit.*"

In Act V. Sc. 2, speaking to *Orlando* of *Oliver* and *Celia*, she says:—

"in these degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage, which they will climb incontinent, or else *be incontinent before marriage.*"

Is the woman who speaks thus, the more or the less indelicate when she owns her hope that she shall be made a wife and a mother by the man she loves. But more:—her cousin *Celia*, who is much the more retiring of the two, when asked by *Rosalind*, in Act III. Sc. 2, to take the cork out of her mouth that *Rosalind* may drink her tidings, makes an answer for which I prefer referring the reader to the text.

In reading the *Winter's Tale* shortly after *As You Like It*, I noticed that *Perdita*, one of Shakespeare's purest and most lovely creations, she, too, who makes the request—unusual with the women of Shakespeare's day—that *Autolycus* may be forewarned to use "no scurrilous words in his tunes," expresses the same thought which Coleridge calls "a most indelicate anticipation." In Act IV. Sc. 3, when *Polixenes* urges her to cultivate "gillivors" in her garden, her lover being by, she thus expresses her dislike of their artificial formation:—

"I'll not put  
The dibble in the earth to set one slip of them;  
No more than, were I painted, I should wish



This youth to say 'twere well; and *only therefore*  
*Desire to breed by me.*"

Again, in the same Scene, we find her expressing an idea even more foreign to our notions of delicacy, because not embodying the idea of maternity; though, strangely enough, this last deficiency may possibly be thought a gain by some. She speaks of strewing her lover with flowers. He asks, "What! like a corse?" She answers:—

"No, like a bank, for love to lie and play on;  
 Not like a corpse: or if,—not to be buried,  
 But quick, [that is, living] *and in mine arms.*"

These instances occurred to me immediately after meeting with the passage on which Theobald, Coleridge and Mr. Knight have commented. Were Shakespeare to be searched, such speeches might be found by dozens in the mouths of his female characters,—for instance, the reply of *Beatrice to Don Pedro* about her putting down *Benedick*. [*Much Ado, &c.*, Act II. Sc. 2.] The custom of his day permitted them, even in the ordinary intercourse of society; and they were expected on the stage, where, it should be remembered, they were actually uttered, not by women, but by men.

I must own that I cannot see any thing intrinsically immodest in *Rosalind's* speech as the original gives it to us; and that I find it decidedly in keeping with Shakespeare's mode of treating the female character. Neither do I find any thing intrinsically indelicate in *Perdita's* speeches. They are not forced, but are, as is also *Rosalind's*, the expression of feelings natural to the female mind, when under the influence of a love which is any thing more than sickly sentimentality; and the feelings being such, the expression of them cannot be justly considered indelicate, considering the manners of the time when Shakespeare wrote.

The jests of *Rosalind* and *Celia*, however, are decidedly and intrinsically indelicate, and would be so in any age,—*because they are jests* : the idea is brought in for the mere sake of a joke upon a forbidden subject. To allude to the relations of the sexes and their consequences, needlessly, and in a manner which calls attention to their forbidden nature, must ever be immodest ; to do so necessarily, honestly and simply, can never be justly so considered.

I have noticed this passage at some length, because the comments which change the text of the original, and call forth my remarks, encourage the spurious modesty too prevalent already, as it seems to me. Better even the blunt, coarse honesty and obtruded knowledge of the relations of sex which prevailed in Elizabeth's day, than the affected and spurious delicacy of 1850, which awakens more attention, provokes more thought, and shows more consciousness. But best—a simple and direct utterance of that which is needful, and an ample knowledge of that which is inevitable in such matters, guided by a modesty springing from within, rather than a propriety imposed from without. Nevertheless, such modesty will always forbid its possessor to trespass needlessly beyond the bounds of the conventional propriety of the day. The idea of trespass is inconsistent with modesty.

But, whatever may be the abstract merits of the question, in regulating Shakespeare's text we must be guided, not by what we think, or by the public sentiment of our day, but by what he thought, if we can discover it ; and it so happens that he has left us his own explicit testimony that he did *not* think it immodest or indelicate for a maiden to wish to be called mother by the children of the man she loves, even when he does not love her. In his *Sonnets*, addressed to that mysterious youth whom he urges to marry, not only does he say,

"For where is she so fair, whose unear'd womb  
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry!"

*Sonnet III.*

but in a subsequent address, he thus breaks forth :

"Now stand you on the top of happy hours ;  
And many maiden gardens, yet unset,  
With virtuous wish would bear you living flowers,  
Much liker than your painted counterfeit."

Note first that glorious first line. It is almost equal to

"jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain top."

And yet Steevens could sneer at Shakespeare's sonnets ! But, to return to the subject,—see that Shakespeare not only makes blooming maidens wish to bear living flowers to his friend, but that he sets aside all cavil at the character of their desire by explicitly saying, that, in his estimation, they did this with "*virtuous wish*." The names of Rowe, Coleridge, and Mr. Knight, are entitled to respect ; but when Shakespeare's own testimony is against them, they must go to the wall ; and Mr. Collier's anonymous folio corrector, who thought with them, must of course go with them.

It certainly merits remark, that if the alleged error were the result of a printer's transposition of the words 'father's' and 'child,' as the advocates of the new reading claim, the line would have appeared,

"No, some of it is for my child fatheres,"

instead of,

"No, some of it is for my childes father ;"

which is the reading of the first folio.

## ACT II. SCENE 3.

"1 *Lord*.                    Indeed, my lord,  
 The melancholy Jaques grieves at that;  
 And, in that kind, swears you do more usurp  
 Than doth your brother that hath banish'd you.  
 To-day, my lord of Amiens, and myself,  
 Did steal behind him, as he lay along  
 Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out  
 Upon the brook that brawls along this wood:  
 To the which place a poor sequester'd stag,  
 That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,  
 Did come to languish; and, indeed, my lord,  
 The wretched animal heav'd forth such groans,  
 That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat  
 Almost to bursting; and the big round tears  
 Cours'd one another down his innocent nose  
 In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool,  
 Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,  
 Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook,  
 Augmenting it with tears.

*Duke S.*                    But what said Jaques?  
 Did he not moralize this spectacle?

1 *Lord*.    O, yes, into a thousand similes.  
 First, for his weeping in the needless stream;  
*Poor deer*, quoth he, *thou mak'st a testament*  
*As wordlings do, giving thy sum of more*  
*To that which had too much*: Then being alone,  
 Left and abandon'd of his velvet friends;  
 'Tis right, quoth he; *this misery doth part*  
*The flux of company*: Anon, a careless herd,  
 Full of the pasture, jumps along by him,  
 And never stays to greet him; *Ay*, quoth Jaques,  
*Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens*;  
 'Tis just the fashion: *Wherefore do you look*  
*Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?*  
 Thus most invectively he pierceth through  
 The body of country, city, court,—  
 Yea, and of this our life; swearing, that we  
 Are mere usurpers, tyrants, and what's worse,  
 To fright the animals, and to kill them up,  
 In their assign'd and native dwelling-place.

*Duke S.* And did you leave him in this contemplation?

*2 Lord.* We did, my lord, weeping and commenting  
Upon the sobbing deer.

*Duke S.* Show me the place.  
I love to cope him in these sullen fits,  
For then he's full of matter."

No character in Shakespeare's dramas has suffered more from the patchworking playmongers than that of *Jakues* in this play. In his case the change resulted from a desire to make the character more interesting to the female part of an audience, and therefore more acceptable to a first comedian. The *Jakues* of the stage is a melancholy, tender-hearted young man, with sad eyes and a sweet voice, talking morality in most musical modulation. Shakespeare's *Jakues* is a morose, cynical, querulous old fellow, who has been a bad young one. He does not have sad moments, but "sullen fits," as the *Duke* says. His melancholy is morbid; and is but the fruit of that utter loss of mental tone which results from years of riot and debauchery. • He has not a tender spot in his heart. There is not a gentle act attributed to him, or a generous sentiment, or a kind word put into his mouth by Shakespeare. He does not even pity the wounded deer which he sees by the brookside: for the touching description of the anguish of the "poor sequestered stag," which *Jakues* gives upon the stage, is, in the play, spoken by the *1st Lord*. Shakespeare's *Jakues* finds in the sufferings of the animal only an occasion to sneer at his fellow-men. He seeks food for discontent in every thing; and the *Duke*, when told that "he was merry, hearing of a song," says:—

"If he *compact of jara*, grow musical,  
We shortly shall have discord in the spheres."  
*Act II. Sc. 7.*

With regard to the age of *Jakues*, Shakespeare's text

is no less unmistakable. The tone of his conversation and conduct is entirely that of a man of long experience of the world. The *Duke*, censuring him for his delight in satire, makes the following remarkable speech, which bears directly upon his age and his character, and which is curtailed upon the stage. He tells him that he would do

"Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin.  
For thou thyself hast been a libertine,  
As sensual as the brutish sting itself;  
And all th' embossed sores, and headed evils  
That thou with license of free foot hast caught,  
Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world."

*Act II. Sc. 7.*

*Jaques*, in addition to his life of libertinism, has been a great traveller, which in Shakespeare's day took many years of a man's life. He is, besides, too old to think of coping with a young man like *Orlando*; for when the latter threatens death to any one who eats until his "affairs are answered," *Jaques*, who is no coward, replies :

"An you will not be answered with reason,  
I must die."

*Act II. Sc. 7.*

But honest *Audrey*, speaks decisively upon this point. Shakespeare's *Jaques* interrupts her and *Touchstone* as they are to be married in the forest by *Sir Oliver Martext*, and speaks very slightly of that divine's clerical qualifications, which the stage *Jaques* neglects to do. *Audrey*, referring to this, says :

"Faith, the Priest was good enough, for all the *old gentleman's* saying."

*Act V. Sc. 1.*

It is evident that *Jaques* should be played as a cynical,

gray-headed, broken-down debauchee ; and that even the exhibition of kindness which conformity to stage custom requires, on the entrance of old *Adam*, is entirely inconsistent with Shakespeare's conception of the character.

Shakespeare has brought this old, high-bred, worn-out voluptuary into fine relief by juxtaposition with one who has nothing in common with him but age ; and in that *Jaques* has the advantage. The serving man *Adam*, humbly born and coarsely nurtured, is no insignificant personage in the drama ; and we find in the healthy tone of his mind, and in his generous heart, which under reverses and wrongs, still preserves its charitable trust in his fellows, as well as in his kindly, though frosty, age, a delightful and instructive contrast to the character of *Jaques*, which could hardly have been accidental.

## SCENE 3.

"*Adam.* At seventeen years many their fortunes seek ;  
But at fourscore, it is too late a week."

I have never heard this passage on or off the stage that it was not read without a pause after 'fourscore' and with the pause of a comma after 'late,'—thus :

But at fourscore it is too late, a week ;

as if *Adam* said, that at fourscore it was a week too late to seek one's fortune ; than which nothing could be flatter, tamer. 'Week' is used here for a period of time, and the old man says that at fourscore it is too late a time to seek one's fortune.

## SCENE 4.

"*Roa.* Oh Jupiter! how weary are my spirits!"

Mr. Knight would read with the first folio, "how merry are my spirits." Whiter suggests that *Rosalind's* merriment was assumed; and Malone that she invokes Jupiter because he was always in good spirits. It seems plain that 'merry' is a misprint for "weary." *Rosalind*, worn out by her desponding journey, exclaims "how weary are my spirits!" and the Clown replies, "I care not for my spirits, if my legs are not weary," that is: "I would not care how weary my spirits might be, if my legs were not so." If *Rosalind* were to say that her spirits were *merry*, *Touchstone's* reply would have no point. Besides, it is not like Shakespeare to open a scene in which the condition of the parties is so obvious as it is in this, with an ironical remark.

## SCENE 7.

"*Jaques.* All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time *plays many parts*," &c.

Steevens quotes from a fragment of Petronius, "*totus mundus exerceat histrioniam*," and Malone from *Damon and Pythias*, 1582,—

"Pythagoras said that this world was like a stage  
Whereon many play their parts,"

also another similar passage from *Orpheus and Euridice*,





1579. But the following passage from Erasmus' *Praise of Folie*, Englished by Sir Thomas Chaloner, occurred to me as much more to the purpose, and likelier to have been the source whence Shakespeare had the hint. It is, besides, a very curious and interesting picture of the drama as it existed in the generation preceding the great dramatist.

"If one at a solemne stage plaie, woulde take upon him to plucke of the players garmentes, whiles they were sayinge theyr partes, and so deciphre unto the lokers on the true and natieue faces of eche of the plaiers, shoulde he not (trowe ye) marre all the mattier? and well deserue for a madman to be peltid out of the place with stones? ye shoulde see yet straightwaies a new transmutacion in thinges: that who before played the woman, shoulde than appeare to be a man: who seemed youthe, shoulde show his hore heares: who counterfayted the kynge shoulde turne to a rascall: and who played god almighty, shoulde become a cobbler as he was before. Yet take away this errour, and as soon take away all togethers, in as much as the feignyng and oonterfaytyng is it that so delighteth the beholders. So lykewyse *all this life of mortall man, what is it else but a certain kynde of stage plaie? whercas men come foorth, disguised one in one arraie, an other in an other, eche playinge his parte*, till at last the maker of the plaie, or bokebearer causeth them to auoyde the skaffolde, and yet *sometyme maketh one man come in two or three times, with sundry partes* and apparayle, as who before represented a kynge, beinge clothed all in purple, hauinge no more but shifted hym selfe a little, shoulde shew hym selfe agayne lyke a woobegon myser."

*The Praise of Folie.* Ed. 1549, Sig. E. iii.

Here we not only have the life of man a play, and men and women players, but each one playing many parts; which, it seems, was required by the exigences of the rude stage which had amused the youth of Shakespeare.

## SONG.

"Heigh, ho! sing heigh, ho! unto the green holly."

The memory of the manner in which I have heard this sung and said by intelligent people, suggests to me that it is perhaps worth noticing that this "heigh ho!" is 'hey ho!' and not the heigh ho! (pronounced 'high, ho!') of a sigh. It should be pronounced 'hay-ho!'

## ACT III. SCENE 2.

"*Cel.* Atalanta's better part."

There has been much learned and ingenious conjecture as to what was "Atalanta's better part." As is common with the editors, the obvious meaning of the phrase has been passed by. Whiter is lauded by Mr. Knight for suggesting that, because of Atalanta's successful contests in running with her lovers, it is an allusion to maiden modesty, such as would characterize a woman who was "zealous to preserve her virgin purity even by the death of her lovers," and which is spoken of as her "better part." In the first place, this is superfluous, as "Lucretia's modesty" is enumerated in the next line; and it is, in the second place, inconsistent with the story of Atalanta, who, when won by Hippomenes by means of the golden apples, impatient to yield what Mr. Whiter represents her as so zealous to preserve, desecrated with her lover the temple of Cybele, who turned the offenders to lions. Atalanta was a finely-formed woman, and a remarkably swift and graceful runner. Her "better part" was evidently her leg. *Orlando* enumerates in his verses personal as well as mental charms; and it is a matter of wonder that the obvious allusion could have escaped any reader.

"*Ros.* Good my complexion! dost thou think though I am caparison'd like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?"

*Rosalind* is, perhaps, the most generally preferred of those of Shakespeare's heroines who are put upon the stage. She has vivacity and wit enough to captivate those who like a woman of spirit; and yet with this there is interwoven so much womanly tenderness and delicacy, and even when wearing doublet and hose, she is, in her gayest moods, so truly, sometimes so touchingly, feminine, that she wins more admirers than she dazzles. It is a very difficult undertaking, the acting of this part of *Rosalind*; and I have seen artists of far more than ordinary talent, and of the best histrionic education, utterly fail in giving a consistent and faithful representation of the character. In the first Scene they are sprightly and well conducted, which is all that they have need to be; though even here, they are apt to lack a little dignity. But, according to their interpretation, when *Orlando* approaches *Rosalind*, she fairly flings herself at his head, and makes love to him in the most formidable and alarming manner. So does not Shakespeare's *Rosalind*. True, she loves at once, and with her whole heart; but she does not advertise the state of her affections to *Orlando* and all her uncle's court, upon the spot. She hardly knows it herself, until she is about to part with him; and then, as she tells him that he has "wrestled well and overthrown more than his enemies," it is with a trembling modesty, all the more shrinking because of its frankness.

In the Forest of Arden, *Rosalind* is, at first, in her element. She plays the "saucy lackey" with unction; and, contrary to her own plea, seems to have, in very deed, "a doublet and hose in her disposition." But when *Orlando* appears, love makes all the feminine traits of Shakespeare's *Rosalind* display themselves beneath the veil of her assumed character. This her representatives seem not to know. No sad earnest-

ness appears under their gayety as they ask *Orlando* if he is "so much in love as his rhymes speak." Again, *Rosalind*,—archly, but ever timidly, questioning,—asks *Orlando*,

"What would you say to me now, an I were your very, very *Rosalind*!"

and yet again, when the sham marriage has taken place,—

"Now how long would you have her after you have possessed her!"

How can they fail to ask those questions with trembling apprehension, but half concealed under a veil of saucy badinage!—and yet they do. Poor *Rosalind*! When *Orlando*, not knowing to whom he speaks, replies that he would have her "for ever and a day," the shadow of a fearful sorrow falls upon her light heart, as she answers:—

"Say a day without the ever. No, no, *Orlando*: men are April when they woo, December when they wed: maids are May when they are maids but the sky changes when they are wives."

But she fears he has betrayed herself, and with a gush of assumed gayety, she breaks out:

"I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock pigeon over his hen; more clamorous than a parrot against rain," &c.

But how rarely do we see this light and shade! The eye of the stage *Rosalind* never quails, is never dimmed; neither does her voice know that tender pathos which is the utterance of a woman's heart who has laid the priceless treasure of an unasked love at the feet of one whom she feels may spurn it.

But to these remarks, what devotee of Shakesperian representations in recent times will not make me bright exception,—Mrs. Charles Kean. The womanly charm,

which she possesses in greater perfection than any other actress of her day, and which pervades more or less every one of her performances, appears in her every look and tone and movement while she plays *Rosalind*. There is, perhaps, in the whole range of the drama, but one other character which requires for its truthful conception and embodiment a more perfect development of the highest histrionic genius than this. I am convinced that long after an artist has attained the mastery of such strongly pronounced characters as *Beatrice*, *Juliet*, *Lady Macbeth*, and *Julia* in the *Hunchback*, she must labor still to reach the deep and quiet power and the subtle delicacy requisite to embody the earnest and impulsive, though merry *Rosalind*, and still more for that required by the pure, gentle, long-suffering, self-sacrificing *Viola*.

Mrs. Kean leaves nothing to be desired in her representation of either of these characters. As *Rosalind*, the expression of her face alone, when, after she has looked a while at *Orlando*, she asks, "Is yonder the man?" shows that her heart is stricken, and that indeed the young wrestler has already "overthrown more than his enemies," and from this time till she steps forward to deliver so bewitchingly that characteristic epilogue, with what delicate perception and flexible skill does she present the ever changing but ever loving *Rosalind*! Who can forget the deep, almost sad earnestness, with which in the midst of her raillery she asks *Orlando*, "But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?" How daintily does she speak to *Silvius* and *Phæbe* that speech so full of mingled wit, mischief and wisdom!—And what a key to the character is her reproachful delivery of "Say a day without the ever," with the instantaneous change to the merry threat, "I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock pigeon over his hen."

But her *Viola* is the crowning excellence of all her performances. The first two Acts of *Twelfth Night* are those in which she produces the greatest impression ; and in these the Scene with *Olivia* and that with the *Duke*, in which *Viola* tells the story of her love, live longest in the memory.

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*Ros.* By no means, sir: Time travels in divers paces with divers persons: I'll tell you who Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal.

*Orl.* I prythee, who doth he trot withal?

*Ros.* Marry, he trots hard with a young maid, between the contract of her marriage, and the day it is solemnized: if the interim be but a se'n-night, time's pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven years.

*Orl.* Who ambles Time withal?

*Ros.* With a priest that lacks Latin, and a rich man that hath not the gout; for the one sleeps easily, because he cannot study; and the other lives merrily, because he feels no pain: the one lacking the burden of lean and wasteful learning; the other knowing no burden of heavy tedious penury: These Time ambles withal."

Upon this passage Mr. Hunter remarks:

"This portion of this very sprightly dialogue appears to have undergone dislocation at a very early period, for the old copies and the new are alike. To *trot hard*, at least in the present use of the phrase, is a rapid motion, only just below the gallop. How, then, can it be said that Time 'trots hard' when a se'n-night seems as long as seven years? A slow motion is intended, such as is meant by the word *ambling*.

"Again, Time passes swiftly with the easy priest and the luxurious rich man who is free from gout: He 'trots hard' with them."

*New Illustrations of Shakespeare*, Vol. I. p. 349.

He would therefore read :

"*Orl.* I prythee, who *ambles* Time withal?

*Ros.* Marry, he *ambles* with a young maid, &c. Time's pace is so ambling, &c.

*Orl.* Who doth he *trot* withal?

*Ros.* With a priest that lacks Latin, &c. These Time *trots* withal."

It is strange that so intelligent a reader of Shakespeare as Mr. Hunter should make such a mistake in so simple a passage. His experience in equitation must have been very limited and very fortunate, or he would know that of all the means of making a short journey seem long, a hard-trotting horse is the surest. *Rosalind* is certainly within bounds in giving it a fifty-multiplying power over time. An ambling nag, on the contrary, affords so easy and luxurious a mode of travelling, that the rider arrives all too soon at his journey's end. That *Rosalind's* comparison refers to the comparative comfort and discomfort, and not to the speed of the different gaits which she enumerates, is evident enough from these very replies about the trot and the amble; but that about the gallop puts it beyond a question.

"*Orl.* Who doth he gallop withal?

*Ros.* With a thief to the gallows; for though he go *as softly as foot* can fall he thinks himself too soon there."

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"*Ros.* A lean cheek, which you have not; a blue eye and sunken, which you have not; an unquestionable spirit, which you have not; a beard neglected, which you have not."

A curious misapprehension of *Rosalind's* third mark of a man in love is not uncommon,—on the stage almost universal. She is there made to utter "unquestionable spirit," as if she meant by it that a lover must needs be of *undeniable boldness*; and upon her saying to *Orlando* that he has it not, the representative of that character is wont to

swagger a little. Now *Orlando*, long before that period of the action, has certainly shown that he does not lack courage ; and an accusation of cowardice would be the last which *Rosalind* would be likely to bring against him, even in jest. She means that a lover is moody, and not willing to be questioned ; that is, that he is “un-questionable.”

Shakespeare uses ‘questionable’ in but one other instance : in *Hamlet*, Act 1, Sc. 4, where *Hamlet* says to the *Ghost*,

“Thou com’st in such a questionable shape.”

Here the word is used in exactly the same sense ; that is, —thou com’st in a shape so proper to be questioned ; and yet this line is often quoted as if “questionable” meant ‘suspicious.’ Obviously it does not ; for *Hamlet* says,

“Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou com’st in such a *questionable* shape,  
That I will *speak to thee*. I’ll call thee Hamlet,  
King, Father, Royal Dane : *O answer me—*  
Let me not burst in ignorance,” &c.

And thus he goes on, hurrying earnest questions upon each other to his father’s spirit, which, to give him information, had thus presented itself “in such a question-able shape.”

### SCENE 3.

“*Jaques*. A material fool !”

“A fool,” says Johnson, “with matter in him.” And strange to say, there is no dissent from this most forced and lexicographical elucidation. Here again, the obvious meaning is neglected. *Jaques* exclaims to himself, after *Touch-*



*stone's* speech :—" A most material fool ;" that, is a complete fool, a thorough fool, a perfect fool ; a fool who is essentially, materially a fool.

"*And* I am not a slut, though I thank the gods I am foul."

As Mr. Knight says, "foul is here used in the sense of *homely*—opposed to *fair*." Thus in the first scene of *Macbeth* the witches, wishing to express the confusion created by their devilish art, say,

**"Fair is foul and foul is fair."**

**SCENE 5.**

**"Sil.** will you sterner be  
Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops?"

Long ago it seemed plain to me that this passage was misprinted, and that we should read,

“will you sterner be  
Than he that *lives* and *dies* by bloody drops!”

The executioner 'lives and dies' by his trade, just as any other man does by his, who 'sticks to his business.' Mr. Singer proposed the same obvious change in his recent *Text of Shakespeare Vindicated*, &c. On referring to the *Variorum* Edition, however, I find that Mr. Tollet made the same suggestion two generations ago. Why so easy and natural a mode of rectifying a great error has not been adopted, I am at loss to conjecture.

## ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Jaq.* \* \* \* but it is a melancholy of mine owne, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundrie contemplation of my trauels, in which by often rumination, wraps me in a most humorous sadnesse."

Thus the original, which is evidently corrupt. The usual reading, the resultant of the labors of Malone and Stevens, is :

"but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects; and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me, is a most humorous sadness."

This makes the passage comprehensible, but with the supposition of two errors (*by* for "my" and *in* for "is"), and a sense not exactly suited to the design of the speech, which is to tell the origin of *Jaques'* melancholy. According to this reading, he says that his melancholy is one of his own, compounded of many simples and extracted from many objects; and then *adds* that the contemplation of his travels is a most humorous sadness. But the point of the whole speech is, that the satirical *Jaques* finds in the contemplation of his travels his cause for melancholy. He means to sneer, *more suo*, at the whole world; and this he is made to do by the text of the original, changed only by the substitution of *my* for 'by'—an admitted typographical error—and of a semicolon for a comma, after "travels."

"but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my

travels; in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness."

*Jaques* thus says, that his melancholy is compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and is indeed the fruit of the sundry contemplation of his travels; his often rumination upon which wraps him in a most humorous sadness. This is the reading of the second folio; and Mr. Knight's differs from it only by lack of the semicolon after "travels;" by which I think that he loses the force of *Jaques'* declaration that his melancholy is indeed the result of the mere contemplation of his travels.

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"*Jaq.* Yes, I have gained my experience.

[*Enter Orlando.*

*Ros.* And your experience makes you sad: I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad; and to travel for it too.

*Orl.* Good day and happiness, dear Rosalind.

*Jaq.* Nay then God be wi' you, an you talk in blank verse.

[*Exit.*

*Ros.* Farewell, monsieur traveller: Look you lisp and wear strange suits; disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are, or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola.—Why, how now, Orlando!" &c.

So learned and discriminating a writer on Shakespeare and the early dramatists as Mr. Dyce, asks (*Remarks on Collier's and Knight's Shakespeares*, p. 63):—"does *Rosalind* say all this to *Jaques* after he has left the stage?" and concludes that "nothing can be more evident than that here the 'exit' of *Jaques* ought to follow 'gondola!'" With all deference,—no. Were it so, a charming and characteristic incident would be lost entirely. *Rosalind* is

a little vexed with *Orlando* for not keeping tryst. She sees him *when he first comes in*, but purposely does not look at him,—any woman will tell Mr. Dyce why. He speaks, but she still, with her little heart thumping at her breast all the while, refuses to notice her lover, and pretends to be absorbed in *Jaques*; and as he retires, driven off by the coming scene of sentiment, the approach of which he detects, she still turns from the poor delinquent, and continues to talk to *Jaques* till a curve in the path takes him out of sight;—then turning, she *seems to see Orlando for the first time*, and breaks upon him with, “Why, how now?” &c. It is incomprehensible to me that such an incident, one so essential to the effect of the scene, should be so mistaken. Well might the old printer of *Promos & Cassandra* say that there are some speeches “which in reading wil seeme hard, and in action appeare plaine.” And as to miscomprehension of Shakespeare’s design,—what can be expected when the most eminent commentators do not see that *Beatrice* loves *Benedick* when *Much Ado about Nothing* opens!

### SCENE 3.

“*Oliver.* Under an *old* oak whose boughs were moss’d with age.”

Though this is the reading of the folio, I cannot admit that Shakespeare would introduce an entirely superfluous monosyllable into a line in a very carefully wrought and rhythmical passage, with no other possible effect than that of marring the description and making the verse halt. It seems to me impossible that Shakespeare could have written,

“Under an *old* oak, whose boughs were moss’d with age,  
And high top bald with dry *antiquity*.”

This is not the tautology of his time. The adjective *must*, I think, have been added in this way. The compositor set up "oak" twice,—such accidents are of frequent occurrence,—or the author repeated it in his MS., and the repetition being noticed, the first "oak" was very naturally changed to *old*. Is it not plain that the line should be read,

"Under an oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age!"

No one can be more unwilling than I to deviate from the original text. Yet there are some cases in which it is absolutely necessary to do so. In the second Scene of the first Act of this play, for instance, the folio reads :

"But yet indeed the taller is his daughter ;"

yet we are obliged to read,

"But yet indeed the smaller is his daughter."

A correction not more imperative than the present in my estimation.

#### ACT V. SCENE 2.

"*Sila*. All adoration, duty, and obseruance;  
All humbleness, all patience, and impatience ;  
All purity, all trial, all obseruance."

Thus the original folio ; but the first or the second "obseruance" should evidently be *obedience*. Malone made the necessary change in the third line. It is mere matter of opinion, but I prefer the substitution of the needful word in the first line, which is made in Mr. Collier's folio. Obe-

dience seems more properly classed with adoration and duty than with purity and trial.

An intelligent correspondent in Maine, whose name is unknown to me, and whose suggestions I shall have other occasions to notice, thus takes exception to the above decision :

"The only object of a change from the original is, of course, to save the repetition of the word *observance*. Then, the question to be decided is, whether or not it is probable that Shakespeare would have considered such repetition an unpleasant one. I am of the opinion, judging according to my own taste, that he would *not* have so considered—indeed, I think it quite probable that he *intended* the repetition for a sort of *refrain* : it follows that I would render the passage as it is rendered in the original. With reference to a supposition of a misprint, it appears to me that the evidence favoring such supposition rests mainly with Malone. The compositor would have been more likely to get the correct word in the first instance, and the wrong one in the second instance by a resetting of the other, than he would have been to get the first word wrong, and the second one right by resetting the first."

In most cases mere repetition is, undoubtedly, not a sufficient reason for making a change in the text of the authentic folio. But in this instance there is more than such a repetition as may or may not be offensive to critical taste. *Silvius* is making an enumeration of the outward signs which are the sure exponents of true love ; and in such a schedule, a repetition of the same thought in the same word in the same sentence is absurd. It must also be remarked, that obedience to the wishes of the beloved is one of the first fruits and surest indices of love,—one which in such an enumeration could not be passed over ; and yet according to the text of the folio it is not mentioned, while

'observance' is specified twice in three lines. Such a repetition is not in Shakespeare's manner ; for though he had peculiarities, senseless iteration was not one of them. As to the typographical error, it is most probable that the compositor not being able to decipher the first word, "obedience," and, looking through the passage for a cue, was able to make out the second, "observance ;" and the resemblance of this to the former, in manuscript, would lead him to suppose that the words were identical. A little more experience in reading his proofs and a knowledge of the accidents of the composing case, would enable my correspondent to see that this is the more natural way of accounting for the error.

## SCENE 3.

"1. *Page*. Shall we clap into't roundly, without hawking or spitting ; which are the only prologues to a bad voice !"

"Hawking and spitting" often are *only* the prologues to the display of a bad voice ; but are they "the *only*" premonitions of that calamity ? My musical experience teaches me otherwise. Unless the text of the original gives an old form of speech which is equivalent to 'only the,'—of which, however, I remember no instance, should we not read,

"which are *only the* prologues to a bad voice !"

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"*Touck*. Truly, young gentlemen, though there was no great matter in the ditty, yet the note was very untuneable,

1. *Page*. You are deceived, sir : we kept time ; we lost not our time."

Shakespeare was a good musician ; and the answer of the *Page* makes it plain, beyond dispute, that, as Theobald and Mason have suggested, *Touchstone* says, "yet the note was very *untimeable*," otherwise the *Page's* answer is no reply at all. In the manuscript of any period it is very difficult to tell 'time' from 'tune,' except by the dot of the *i*, so frequently omitted ; and as most people think that to be in tune or out of tune is the principal success or the principal failure of a musical performance, it is by no means strange that the word written in the old hand, with the *i* undotted, —thus, *Untimeable*, should be taken for *Untuneable*.

I can speak from experience, that in ninety-nine cases in a hundred, when 'time' is written it will be set up 'tune.' One curious instance occurs in *King John*, Act III. Scene 3.

" *K. John.*                    I had a thing to say,—  
But I will fit it with some better time."

The last line is printed in the original,

"But I will fit it with some better *tuna*."



## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

### INDUCTION.

"*Sly*. I'll pheese you, in faith."

Comment is made on this word "pheese." Johnson says it means, 'to separate a twist into single threads;' and bases his opinion on the definition of Sir T. Smith *De Sermone Anglico*. "To feize means *in fila deducere*." Gifford says it means "to beat, chastise or humble;" and Mr. Charles Knight says that in this sense Shakespeare uses it in the line,

"An he be proud with me I'll pheese his pride."

*Troilus & Cressida.*

All wrong, as any 'Yankee' could tell the learned gentlemen. The word has survived here with many others which have died out in England, and are thence called Americanisms. 'To pheese,' is 'to irritate,' 'to worry.' Nothing is more common than for a New England housewife to come in, irritated by some domestic conflict, and plumping down in her rocking chair and beginning to fan herself with her apron, to break out, "Plague on that hussey! she's put me all in a pheese." *Sly* has just had a war

of words with Mistress *Hacket*, and he enters, threatening to worry her to her heart's content. The toping tinker has no thought of chastising the good ale-wife.

# ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Tran.* Only, good master, while we do admire  
This virtue and this moral discipline,  
Let's be no stoics, nor no stocks, I pray;  
Or so devote to Aristotle's checks,  
As Ovid be an outcast quite abjured.  
Balk logic with acquaintance that you have,  
And practise rhetoric in your common talk."

This passage has, strangely enough, been thought obscure by some critics. Blackstone, Mr. Collier's folio corrector Mr. Singer, and strangest of all, Mr. Dyce, read "Aristotle's *ethicks*" for "Aristotle's checks." "What are 'Aristotle's checks?' " asks Mr. Collier. Plainly, they are Aristotle's ethical principles, which check the propensities that Master *Tranio's* more favored author, Ovid, stimulate. *Lucentio* has but just said ;

"for the time I study,  
Virtue and *that part of philosophy*,  
Will I apply, that treats of happiness  
By *virtue specially* to be achiev'd."

To which *Tranio* immediately replies :

"*Mi perdonate*, gentle master mine,  
I am in all affected as yourself.  
Glad that you thus continue your resolve,  
To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy.  
Only, good master, while we do admire  
*This virtue*, and this moral discipline,  
Let's be no stoics, nor no stocks, I pray;  
Or so devote to Aristotle's checks  
As Ovid be an outcast quite abjur'd:"

Surely a clearer passage was never written, or an apter word ever chosen. Blackstone's conjecture is both ingenious and plausible. Ingenuity and plausibility are very well ; but it is not well to "let them appear when there is no need of such vanity."

“Balk logic” of the original has been presumptuously changed to “*Talk* logic” in most editions ; in spite of the fact that ‘to balk’ means ‘to puzzle,’ ‘to deal in cross purposes ;’ and in spite of this instance of its use by Spenser, which is quoted by Boswell in the *Variorum* Edition :

“But to occasion him to further talke,  
To feed her humor with his pleasing style,  
Her list in *stryfull termes* with him to *balke*.”  
*Faerie Queene*, B. III. Can. 2, Stan. xii.

ACT IV. SCENE 2.

"*Biond.*                                I spied  
An ancient angel coming down the hill."

The word "angel" has always presented a difficulty. The most plausible conjectural change which has been made, is that of Sir Thomas Hanmer, who would read *engle*, 'a gull,' from the French *engluer*, 'to catch with bird lime.' The worst change is that in Mr. Collier's folio,—*ambler*, than which nothing can be more tame and puerile. Gifford supports *engle* in a note on Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, in which he quotes, in addition to Jonson's own use of the word, the parallel passages from Gascoigne's *Supposes*, which was the source of a part of Shakespeare's plot. In this the messenger *judged* from the habit and the looks of the old man, that he was "a good soul," "none of the wisest," "a man of small *sapientia*," "a cod's head." But hear Mr. Dyce :

"I never felt quite satisfied with the emendation 'enghle' (ingeniously as it is supported by Gifford, note on B. Jonson's *Works*, ii. 430); nor does that of the Manuscript-corrector appear to me so certain as it does to Mr. Collier.

After all, is '*angel*' the right reading (though not in the sense of *messenger*, which is quite unsuited to the passage),— '*an ancient angel*' being equivalent to *an ancient worthy*, or simply to *an old fellow*? I must not be understood as answering this query in the affirmative when I cite from Cotgrave's *Dict.* '*Angelot à la grosse escaille. An old Angell*; and by metaphor, a fellow of th' old, sound, honest, and worthie stamp.'"

*A Few Notes, &c.* p. 71.

Plausible and well supported as *engle* is, this forbids us to make the change; for here is a perfectly apt and congruous signification for the original word, furnished by a contemporary English lexicographer.\*

#### SCENE 4.

"*Tran.* I thank you, sir: Where then do you know best  
We be affied?" &c.

The suggestion in Mr. Collier's folio that we should read,

"Where then do you *hold* best  
We be affied?"

seems to be an ingenious and judicious correction of a probable error of the press.

\* Mr. Dyce, writing only for critics, thinks it needless to give any information about Cotgrave's Dictionary. It is a very carefully compiled and copious French and English Lexicon, published in London in 1611. The author, Randle Cotgrave, appears from passages in his dedication of the work to "*Sir WILLIAM CECIL Knight, Lord Burghley and sonne, and heire apparent vnto the Earle of Exeter,*" to have been a tutor in the family of that Nobleman.

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

### ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*King.* I'll see thee to stand up."

This line, about which some have found sufficient obscurity to alter "see" to *fee*, and which even Mr. Knight interprets,—“I'll notice you when you stand up,” seems to me very easy of comprehension, and to mean ‘I would have thee to stand up.’

---

"*Hel.*                      My maiden's name  
Seared otherwise ; no worse of worst extended,  
With vilest torture let my life be ended."

What is the meaning of the last line and the previous half-line ? With every help I can make out nothing which approaches intelligibility, unless we read with Boswell,

"*nor worse of worst extended.*"

Even this is obscure, and can hardly be received as Shakespeare's. But it should be remarked that this blindest of passages, the one which, perhaps, is most hopelessly cor-

rupted by typographical errors, is passed by, untouched, in Mr. Collier's folio; the correctors of which, while, in hundreds of instances, they have degraded that which was lofty and obscured that which was clear, have left the most corrupted lines in the confusion due to the carelessness of the early printers. In such passages, the "authoritative copy" seems to have strangely failed them.

### ACT III. SCENE 2.

"*Clown.* \* \* \* I know a man that had this trick of melancholy hold a goodly manor for a song."

Thus the original. The third folio,—"*sold* a goodly manor," &c., Mr. Knight retains "hold," because the selling of a manor "is no illustration of the *Clown's* argument, that singing is a symptom of melancholy." Certainly not; but it is an evidence of the seller's fond love of music, and of his indifference to the affairs of the world. Besides, the singing of which the *Clown* speaks is not skilful, such as would lead a monarch to bestow lands on the tenure of a song from the singer, or even to accept his services in a proper fulfilment of a previous grant. The craving of moody, melancholy men for music, is very great. In *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 5, *Amiens* has just sung, and *Jaques*, "the melancholy *Jaques*," prays:

"More, I prithee, more.

*Am.* It will make you melancholy, Monsieur *Jaques*.

*Jaq.* I thank it. I can suck melancholy, out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs: more, I prithee, more."

Afterwards he importunes, "Come, more!" "Will you sing?" "Come, sing!" And so *Mariana*, in *Measure for*

*Measure*, when the *Duke* finds her with a boy singing to her :

"I cry you mercy, sir; and well could wish  
You had not found me here so musical:  
Let me excuse me, and believe me so,—  
My mirth it much displeas'd, *but pleas'd my woe.*"

—

"*Hel.*                      O you leaden messengers  
That ride upon the violent speede of fire,  
Fly with false ayme, move the still-peering aire  
That sings with piercing."

Various are the efforts to correct this passage, which stands thus palpably corrupt in the original. All seem to me, and in truth to the conjecturers themselves, to be unsatisfactory. The difficulty is in "still-peering," which would be the easiest possible misprint for "still '*pearing*.'" May we not read, with the probability of correctness,

"Fly with false aim; move the still '*pearing* air  
That sings with piercing!"

As to the use of '*pear*' for '*appear*,'—in *Hamlet*, Act IV. Sc. 5, the following reading of the quarto of 1611,

"It shall as level to your judgment '*pear*,  
As day does to your eye,"

has been generally received; and, whatever may be its intrinsic value, shows that the contraction was in use in Shakespeare's day, and is admitted in our own. Indeed, the contraction is common in the writings of Shakespeare's contemporaries. "Move the still appearing air," is cer-

tainly consistent with the conditions of nature ; my only doubt is, whether it be not too literally so.

#### ACT IV. SCENE 2.

" *Dia.* 'Tis not the many oaths that make the truth ;  
But the plain single vow, that is vow'd true.  
What is not holy, that we swear not by,  
But take the highest to witness: Then, pray you, tell me,  
If I should swear by Jove's great attributes,  
I lov'd you dearly, would you believe my oaths,  
When I did love you ill! This has no holding,  
To swear by him whom I protest to love,  
That I will work against him: Therefore your oaths  
Are words, and poor conditions; but unseal'd;  
At least in my opinion.

*Ber.* Change it, change it;  
Be not so holy-cruel: love is holy;" &c.

The last sentence in *Diana's* speech, as thus printed in the received text, is confessed on all hands to be incomprehensible. Johnson and Malone proposed to read,

"To swear to him whom I protest to love  
That I will work against him."

But surely nothing is gained by making *Diana* protest love, and swear to the man whom she protests to love, that she will work against him. This is sheer absurdity; not the inconsistency implied by *Diana*. Mr. Collier's corrector strikes out the passage in despair.—Where was his authoritative copy? Mr. Singer proposes,

"To swear by him *when* I protest to Love," &c.

This is identical in one point with my own conjecture, and



does something towards the correction of the errors in the passage. But the chief difficulty,—the determination of the antecedent of the last “him,” still exists ; for to suppose “him” to refer to Jove, and that to “work against him” means merely to break the oath taken in his name, is to force a very lame and impotent construction.

“Jove” makes the trouble. He stands in the place of *Love*. Editors, and printers too, perhaps, have been confirmed in the error, by supposing “the highest” to refer necessarily to the chief of the gods ; whereas it is a general term. *Diana* says,

“What is *not* holy that we swear not by  
But take the highest [i. e. the most sacred] to witness,”

and *Bertram* in his reply, says “love is holy,” showing plainly that the oath was in *Love*’s name. A reference to the first folio confirms my conjecture that “Jove” is an error of the printer for *Love*. The passage in the original is printed thus ;

“Then pray you tell me  
If I should sweare by Ioue’s great attributes  
I lou’d you deerely, would you beleue my oathes  
When I did loue you ill? This ha’s no holding,  
To sweare by him whom I protest to loue  
That I will worke against him.”

It will be seen that the setting up of ‘I’ for ‘l,’ an error which occurs continually at this day, and the mistake of ‘whom’ for ‘when,’ an error almost equally common, have caused the trouble. *Diana* may well say, and evidently means to say, that there is no holding [consistency] in swearing by *Love*, when she protests to *Love* that she will work against him. Should we not then read,

"If I should swear by *Love's* great attributes,  
 I lov'd you dearly, would you believe my oaths  
 When I did love you ill? This has no holding,  
 To swear by him, *when* I protest to Love  
 That I will work against him."

---

"*Dia*. I see that men make ropes in such a *scarre*  
 That we'll forsake ourselves."

None of the emendations of this passage are satisfactory. Rowe's *hopes* is better, perhaps, than "ropes:" but still 'to make hopes,' is a wretched phrase. The change by the same editor, and in Mr. Collier's folio, of "a *scarre*" into *affairs*, or by Malone into *a scene*, or, as Mr. Singer proposes, *a scare*, is even less acceptable. The lines seem to be hopelessly corrupted.

### SCENE 3.

"2d *Lord*. How is this justified?

1st *Lord*. The stronger part of it by her own letters, which make her story true, even to the point of her death; her death itself, which could not be her office to say, is come, was faithfully confirmed by the rector of the place."

Mr. Collier's folio proposes "stranger part" for "stronger part," which is evidently right. It also has "*and faithfully confirmed,*" for "was faithfully confirmed;" an unnecessary emendation, which results from a perversion of meaning, itself consequent upon improper punctuation. The speaker does not mean to say that her death "is come," but that her letters told her story up to the time of her death, and that as she could not, of course, announce that event herself, it was done by another,—"*the rector of the place.*" Remove the comma after "say," and read:

"her death itself,—which could not be her office to say is come, was faithfully confirmed by the rector of the place."

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## ACT V. SCENE 1.

We owe to Mr. Collier's folio two acceptable emendations in this play. For the stage direction, "*Enter a gentle Astringer*," in this Scene, it has "*Enter a gentleman, a stranger*." The context shows that he was a stranger to *Helena*, although she knew him by reputation. When he afterward appears at the court of the French king, where he is known, he is announced—"Enter a gentleman."

## SCENE 3.

"*King*                      She hath that ring of yours.

*Ber.* I think she has: certain it is, I liked her,  
And boarded her i' the wanton way of youth.  
She knew her distance, and did angle for me,  
Madding my eagerness with her restraint,  
As all impediments in fancy's course  
Are motives of more fancy; and, in fine,  
Her insuit coming with her modern grace,  
Subdued me to her rate: she got the ring;  
And I had that, which any inferior might  
At market-price have bought."

"Insuit coming" is utterly incomprehensible, and has baffled the ingenuity of all the editors and commentators. Mr. Collier's folio substitutes *infinite cunning*, which is the reading, beyond a doubt. The words are so like in manuscript that they might easily be mistaken for each other; and the context not only admits, but requires them. This is a fine example of proper conjectural emendation,

and is one of the most successful efforts in Mr. Collier's folio. But it should be remarked that no better copy or "authoritative" manuscript was needed for it, it having been discovered by Mr. Thomas Walker, the author of *The Original*, a series of essays published twenty years before the discovery of Mr. Collier's folio. It should be constantly kept in mind, in considering the worth of that volume, that all its most remarkable and acceptable emendations have been discovered by the conjectural ingenuity of thoughtful readers of Shakespeare; which shows that their existence in the folio is no proof that its correctors had better sources of information than we have. The entirely original emendations are, with very rare exceptions, the thousand which are worse than worthless.



## TWELFTH NIGHT.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Duke.* That straine agen;—it had a dying fall:  
O, it came ore my eare like the sweet sound  
That breathes vpon a banke of Violets  
Stealing, and giuing Odour."

Thus this beautiful passage stands in the original. It changed "sound" to *wind*, and Pope substituted for *South*, in which he is followed by the editor of every edition since his day, except Mr. Knight. But what right has Pope to change "sound" to *South*, more than Rowe to change it to *wind*? Would either have been big enough to own that he could not understand,

"O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound  
That breathes upon a bank of violets."!

Upon what ground did they then presume to change? Because *wind* or *South* were better words, in their application, than "sound"? Mr. Knight says the question between these words in effect is, "which is the better?" There is no such question up for discussion. If, instead of "sound," there were some word without meaning, or even with a meaning incongruous with the tone of

the passage, and both *wind* and *South* were proposed as substitutes, then there would be a question, between *wind* and *South*, as to which is the better word. But "sound" is in the original text. It is, to say the least, a comprehensible and appropriate word; and until Rowe, Pope, and their successors, have taken out letters patent to *improve* the text of Shakespeare, would it not be better for them to confine themselves to editing it? The carelessness of the printers of the authentic folio, or their inability to decipher the manuscript furnished to them by Shakespeare's friends and partners, affords a field for conjecture wide enough for the reasonable ambition of any editor, without his attempting to improve those passages which are comprehensible. I wonder that Pope did not perfect his change, and read,

"O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet *South*.—  
That *breeze* upon a bank of violets  
Stealing, and giving odour."

He certainly had as much right to change "breathes" to *breeze*, and to call the south wind 'that breeze,' as to change "sound" to *South*.

But did Pope, or the editors who have followed him, ever lie musing on the sward at the edge of a wood, and hear the low sweet hum of the summer air, as it kissed the coyly-shrinking wild flowers upon the banks, and passed on, loaded with fragrance from the sweet salute? If they ever did, how could they make this change of "sound" to *South*? and if they never did, they are unable to appreciate the passage, much less to improve it. As Mr. Knight has well remarked, Shakespeare never makes the South an odor-bringing wind. He speaks only of "the foggy South," "the contagion of the South," "the spongy South," "the dew-dropping South:" expressions, these, not at all descriptive



of the wind which the love-sick Duke thought of when he said,

"the sweet sound  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing, and giving odor."

---

"*Duke.* O when mine eyes did see Olivia first  
(Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence)  
That instant was I turned into a hart;  
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,  
E'er since pursue me.—"

What need of this parenthesis, which is not in the original? Yet it is inserted by some of the editors, among them Mr. Knight, who remarks that "the line is certainly parenthetical." Not at all. *Orsino* says that when he first saw *Olivia*, he thought she made the air around her pure; and then goes on to say, that, on the instant, his desires pursued him as Actæon's dogs their master. Read:

"O! when mine eyes did see Olivia first,  
Methought she purged the air of pestilence:  
That instant was I turned into a hart;  
And my desires," &c.

---

"*Duke.* O, she, that hath a heart of that fine frame,  
To pay this debt of love but to a brother  
How will she love, when the rich golden shaft  
Hath kill'd the flocks of all affections else  
That live in her! when, liver, brain, and heart,  
Those sovereign thrones, are all supplied, and fill'd  
(Her sweet perfections) with one self king!"

Much jarring comment on this passage, both as to "sweet perfections" and "self king," which in the second

folio is made "self-same king." This emendation supplies a syllable much needed both for sense and metre. Mr. Knight's interpretation of the passage seems to me to be obviously the true one. He says: "The phrase ought probably to be 'her sweet *perfection*.' The filling of the 'sovereign thrones' is the perfection of *Olivia's* merits." Capell gave, in his edition:

"when liver, brain and heart,  
Those sovereign thrones, are all supplied and filled  
(Her sweet perfection) with one self-same king."

This is evidently the true reading. Mr. Knight quotes from Froissart to show that it was anciently believed, that a well-assorted marriage was necessary to the "perfection" of a woman. Is not the quotation a little superfluous? Has that belief yet entirely died out? And does not the whole of the *Duke's* speech point to the full development of *Olivia's* nature, by her love of him who is to fill her heart?

## SCENE 2.

" *Vio.* O that I served that lady,  
And might not be deliver'd to the world  
Till I had made mine own occasion mellow  
What my state is."

Hear the great commentators of the last century upon this passage, and upon the character of *Viola*!

"And might not be delivered to the world.] I wish I might not be *made public* to the world, with regard to the *state* of my birth and fortune, till I have gained a ripe opportunity for my design.



"Viola seems to have formed a very deep design with very little premeditation: she is thrown by shipwreck on an unknown coast, hears that the prince is a bachelor, and resolves to supplant the lady whom he courts."

JOHNSON.

"In the novel on which Shakespeare founded this play, the Duke Apollonius being driven by a tempest on the isle of Cyprus, Silla, the daughter of the governor, falls in love with him, and on his departure goes in pursuit of him. All this Shakespeare knew, and probably intended in some future scene to tell, but afterwards forgot it. If this were not the case, the impropriety censured by Dr. Johnson must be accounted for from the poet's having here, as in other places, sometimes adhered to the fable he had in view, and sometimes departed from it. Viola, in a subsequent scene, plainly alludes to her having been secretly in love with the Duke:

'My father had a daughter lov'd a man,  
As it might be perhaps, were I a woman,  
I should, your lordship.

Duke.

And what's her history?

Vio. A blank, my lord, she never told her love! ' &c.

MALONE.

"It would have been inconsistent with Viola's delicacy to have made an open confession of her love for the Duke to the Captain."

BOSWELL.

*Variorum Shakespeare*, vol. XI, p. 347.

And upon *Viola's* remark "I'll serve this duke" in her next speech, Johnson adds:

'Viola is an excellent schemer, never at a loss; if she cannot serve the lady, she will serve the Duke.'

*Ibid.* p. 348.

And this is the appreciation which Shakespeare's labors met at the hands of such men as Johnson and Malone!

The 'great moralist' could be so bisson blind as to call the most unsophisticated and self-sacrificing character in the whole range of fiction "an excellent schemer," and attribute to her the formation of a deep design to supplant a lady in the affections of her lover ! How this could happen, is incomprehensible ; for an appreciation of *Viola's* gentle and unselfish character is not necessary to prevent such a misapprehension ; it needs but to read the text with a reasonable degree of attention, to see that such a supposition has not the least foothold on probability. Malone's supposition, that Shakespeare forgot to tell us that *Viola* had started in pursuit of the *Duke*, and his opinion, that *Viola* "plainly alludes to her having been secretly in love with the *Duke*," as well as Boswell's defence of *Viola*, on the ground that her delicacy would forbid her to tell the *Captain* of her love for the *Duke*, are all equally preposterous, and show that all three of the critics were equally ignorant of the subject on which they spoke, and equally unable to sympathize with the character which they grossly asperse, or traduce no less by a pitiful defence.

*Viola* is shipwrecked, and cast upon a coast unknown to her ; and when she finds out where she is, she asks,

"And what should I do in Illyria?"

She had heard her father name *Orsino*, but had never seen him. In her abandoned and dejected state, she longs to get into the service of a lady who

"hath abjur'd the company  
And sight of men,"

and not to be "delivered to the world" till her opportunities and her talents had enabled her to better her then forlorn

condition. She is told that she cannot get an audience of this lady ; and then, perforce, is obliged to seek the protection of the *Duke*, which she does, not as a beautiful girl in distress, but in the very disguise most calculated to prevent him from taking any personal interest in her. But the danger proves to be reversed. She loves him deeply, hopelessly ; and yet at his bidding she goes to his “sovereign cruelty,” effects the entrance denied to all others, and pleads his cause with such a fervor, that it would seem she was suing for her own happiness, rather than asking for that, which, in her own words, would make her life “a blank.” In her disguise she captivates the very woman whose love she has sought for another ; and so far is she from rejoicing at this check upon the *Duke's* designs, or finding a malicious and almost pardonable pleasure in the fatal and ludicrous passion of her rival, that she exclaims, repenting of her disguise, and pitying her master :

“I am the man ;—If it be so, (as 'tis,)
 Poor lady, she were better love a dream.
 Disguise, I see, thou art a wickedness,
 Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.
 How easy is it for the proper false
 In women's waxen hearts to set their forms !
 Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we ;
 For, such as we are made of, such we be.
 How will this fadge ? My master loves her dearly :
 And I, poor monster, fond as much on him ;
 And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me ;
 What will become of this ! As I am man,
 My state is desperate for my master's love :
 As I am woman,—now alas the day !
 What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe !
 O time, thou must untangle this, not I ;
 It is too hard a knot for me to untie.”

And this is the woman whom Samuel Johnson, LL. D. could call a schemer, and accuse of a deep, selfish design ;

and whom Malone and Boswell could suppose in love with the *Duke*, forgetting, the while, that at the time when they defend her from the indelicacy of confessing her love for him to another, she *had never seen him*. Malone's supposition, that *Viola's* beautiful allusion to herself in the story which she tells the *Duke* of her pretended sister, is an allusion to her "*having been* secretly in love with him,"—that is, of course, in love with him before the play opens,—is too absurd to merit notice. Indeed, indeed, the best part of Shakespeare was written in an unknown tongue to these learned gentlemen. If there ever were an ingenuous, unsophisticated, unselfish character portrayed, it is this very *Viola*,—Dr. Johnson's "excellent schemer," who, wretched and in want, forms that "very deep design" of supplanting a high-born beauty of whom she has never heard, in the affections of a man of princely rank, whom she has never seen.

## SCENE 3.

"*Sir Tob.* An thou let part so, Sir Andrew, would thou might'st never draw sword again."

It seems not improbable that *her* dropped out between "let" and "part" as Mr. Collier's folio suggests. An intelligent friend, however, who has read Shakespeare much, and the comments on him, not at all, on seeing this admission, remarked:—" 'An thou let part so,' is better as it is. Shakespeare dropped *her* himself.—Let stupidity pick her up." I am more than half inclined to think with him.

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"*Sir And.* Ay, 'tis strong, and does indifferent well in a flame coloured stock."

The old copies read "*dam'd* coloured stock." "Flame coloured" is Pope's suggestion. Mr. Collier's folio proposes "*dun* colored;" upon which Mr. Dyce remarks:—"That Sir Andrew, a gallant of the first water, should ever dream of casing his leg in a '*dun* coloured stock,' is not to be supposed for a moment." (*A Few Notes, &c.*, p. 75.) I do not mean to say that *dam'd* should be changed to *dun*; but if Mr. Dyce will but look through old illuminations, tapestries, and the like, he will find that *dun* colored hose were as much affected by gallants of the first water three and four hundred years ago, as *dun* colored trowsers and waistcoats are by gallants of the first water in our own day.

## SCENE 5.

*Clo.* —good Madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.

*Oli.* Can you do it?

*Clo.* Dexteriously, good Madonna."

Thus the *Clown's* reply stands in the first folio; and yet the editors have changed it to, "Dexterously, good Madonna." How natural that the *Clown* should say, "Dexteriously, good Madonna." Why did not the editors, when he replies to *Sir Andrew Ague-cheek* "I did impetico thy gratillity," make him say, 'I did put in my petticoat thy gratuity?' Notwithstanding the recent labors of Mr. Collier and Mr. Knight, and the too often unquestioning deference of the latter gentleman to the first folio, that text still needs careful collation with the received version, that we may not be the losers by the presuming and ruthless excisions and changes of the editors of the last century.

"*Oli.* But we will draw the Curtain and shew you the picture. Look you, sir; such a one I was this present."

Mr. Collier's folio corrector would feebly amend this passage by the violent change, "such a one I *am at* this present." Mr. Singer makes a simpler and a better change, *i. e.* 'such a one I was *as* this presents.' But this is only a modification for the worse of Zachary Jackson's "such a one *as* I was this presents," which was made long ago, and which is the correct reading, beyond a question.

#### ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Seb.* A lady, sir, though it was said she much resembled me, *was yet* of many accounted beautiful: but though I could not, *with such estimable wonder*, overfar believe that, yet thus far will I boldly publish her."

The words in italic letter are utterly incomprehensible; but the sentence is easily understood without them. They are evidently interjectional. All the attempts at emendation, involve a change in the body of the sentence. In all such cases it is better to let the text stand, pass over the interjected phrase, and be satisfied with the body of the sentence, than to disturb that which is clear, and to obtain by it only a diffusion of turbidness through the whole passage, or a substitution of something which is utterly unlike the original.

#### SCENE 3.

"*Sir Toby.* Out o' tune? sir, ye lie."

Theobald's correction to "out o' *time*?" is manifestly demanded. *Malvolio* had said nothing about tune; but

he had asked, "Is there no respect of place, persons, nor *time* in you." *Sir Toby*, in his drunken confusion of ideas, replies, "We did *keep time*, sir, in our catches." After further remonstrance on the part of the Steward, and a futile attempt on the part of the toppers to continue the vocal amusement which he had interrupted, the intoxicated knight reverts, in the true revolving style of drunken thought, to the remark to which he first replied ; and again, with comical earnestness, defends the party against the supposed or assumed attack upon their musical accuracy. The text, as it has hitherto been printed, destroys one fine exhibition of the poet's knowledge of the workings of the mind under all circumstances. Besides all this, the substitution of 'tune' for 'time' is the most natural and frequent error of the compositor when setting up musical 'matter,' as I know by experience, and as I have pointed out in a comment on *Touchstone's* remark to the singing *Page*, in *As You Like It*, Act V., Scene 3.

#### SCENE 4.

"*Duke*. Give me some music:—now, good morrow, friends:—  
Now, good Cesario, but that piece of song,  
That old and antique song we heard last night;  
Methought it did relieve my passion much,  
More than light airs and recollected terms,  
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times :—"

"Terms" does not, I think, mean musical phrases ; nor is it a misprint for *tunes*, both of which explanations have been suggested by the editors. The *Duke* speaks of a song, "an antique song." A song consists of both music and words ; and this song, which was "old and plain," by reason of the simple sweetness of its air and the homely direct-

ness of its words, suited the mood of the lover, more than the "light airs" [*i. e.* gay, trivial music] to which the "recollected terms" [*i. e.* carefully sought out expressions] in the songs of those "most brisk and giddy-paced times," were set. "Recollected terms" might well be applied to the words of a song written under the influence of *Euphues his England*.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

*Vio.* Save thee friend, and thy music! Dost thou live by thy tabor?

*Clo.* No, sir; I live by the church.

*Vio.* Art thou a churchman?

*Clo.* No such matter, sir: I do live by the church, for I do live by my house, and my house does stand by the church."

Upon this passage Mr. Collier remarks: "The clown's reply, 'No, sir, I live by the church,' is not intelligible, if we do not suppose him to have wilfully misunderstood *Viola* to ask whether he lived near the sign of the tabor, which might be either a music shop or a tavern." This certainly exhibits such a want of capacity to apprehend the humor of *equivoque*, as fully to justify Mr. Singer's conclusion that "we can now fully comprehend the sympathetic support Mr. Collier gives to the [MS.] corrector's attempts to get rid of similar passages of playful banter, which he had not the capacity to understand."

### ACT V. SCENE 1.

*Oli.* Open it and read it.

*Clo.* Look then to be well edified, when the fool delivers the madman.  
'By the Lord, madam,'—

*Oli.* How now, art thou mad?

*Clo.* No, madam, I do but read madness," &c.



Had any body, before I read an annotated edition of Shakespeare, told me that a note could be perpetrated upon this passage, I should have believed it with difficulty. How is it possible to avoid seeing that the *Clown*,—beginning to read *Malvolio's* letter, which commences, “By the Lord, madam, you wrong me, and the world shall know it,”—as he utters the first words, is instantly reprovèd by *Olivia* for his supposed profanity in her presence! What is his reply? —“I do but *read* madness.” And yet Steevens says:

“I am by no means certain that I understand this passage, which, indeed, the author of *The Revisal* [Heath] pronounces to have no meaning. I suppose the clown begins reading the letter in some fantastical manner, on which *Olivia* asks him, if he is mad. No, madam (says he), I do but barely deliver the sense of this madman's epistle: if you would have it read as it ought to be (that is), *with* such a frantic accent and gesture as a madman would read it, you must allow *vox*, i. e. you must furnish the reader with a voice, or, in other words, read it yourself. But Mr. Malone's explanation I think is preferable to mine.”

Here is Mr. Malone's explanation, to which his rival so modestly defers:

“The clown, we may presume, had begun to read the letter in a very loud tone, and probably with extravagant gesticulation. Being reprimanded by his mistress, he justifies himself by saying, ‘if you would have it read in character, as such a *mad* epistle ought to be read, you must permit me to assume a *frantic* tone.’”

To these, appearing strangely enough in such company, on such a subject, we must add Mr. Knight, who says: “When the *Clown* begins to read he raves and gesticulates; upon which *Olivia* says ‘art thou mad?’” After this,

whom can we trust, and what passage, how plain soever, is safe from perversion !

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“ *Oli.* —Out of question, 'tis Maria's hand,  
And now I do bethink me, it was she  
First told me thou wast mad; then cam'st in smiling,  
And in such forms which here were presupposed  
Upon thee in the letter.”

What does “then cam'st in smiling” mean? Out of question we should read “*thou* cam'st in smiling.” [I find that Zachary Jackson has made this suggestion. As he well points out, the *ou* in manuscript might be easily mistaken for *en*. Indeed, in reading the best manuscript of Shakespeare's day, the closest examination can with difficulty distinguish one from the other. Then, the bow of *e*, usually very small, was turned to the left instead of the right.

## THE WINTER'S TALE.

### ACT I. SCENE 2.

"*Her.* I love thee not a jar o' the clock behind  
What lady, she her lord.

Mr. Collier's folio has, "What lady *should* her lord," which is plausible and has found defenders. But I confess that the old reading is far more pleasing to me. I have always read it as 'I love thee not a jar o' the clock behind what [ever] lady she [may be who loves] her lord.' The elision is great; but it seems to me to make the sentence neither obscure nor inelegant. I find, by experiment, that the sympathetic and intelligent readers of Shakespeare of my acquaintance, learned and unlearned, are with me; though all could not supply the elided words. But he who would rightly read Shakespeare, or any poet of high grade, must, in Shakespeare's words, be able to "apprehend more than cool reason comprehends."

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I cannot pass by the tame and ridiculous literalism of adding to *Hermione's* observation, in this Scene,

"You look  
As if you held a brow of much distraction,"



more barbarous, any expression cruder or more confused ? To call the Queen part of *the theme* of *Leontes* but no part of his *suspicion* ! His theme was his jealousy ; and his suspicion was, that she was false ! It is natural that *Polixenes* should express a hope that his flight might comfort the Queen ; but what can be flatter or tamer than that he should then go on to say that she was part of the King's theme but no part of his suspicion,—even if it were true. But in every sense in which she could be said to be a part of the suspicion of *Leontes*, she *was* a part of it. Her actual innocence could not make her seem to *Polixenes* any the less a part of the *suspicion* of *Leontes*—if we must use such an uncouth phrase. Innocent or guilty, her husband's suspicion of her was an existing fact. The lines had better be stricken from the volume than so interpreted.

In this perplexity I bring forward for consideration an emendation which has been suggested to me, premising that the difficulty can exist only in the words “and comfort” and “part of his Theame,” as the other parts of the passage are not only clear in themselves, but entirely consistent with each other and the situation of the speaker ; and also adding that the punctuation of the passage in the original is so careful and judicious, that it was evidently printed with unusual attention, and that the error *must* therefore have arisen from obscurity in the manuscript. It *must* also be remembered that the most obvious consequence of the suspicions of *Leontes* was the loss to *Hermione* of her position as his wife ; and that the precipitate flight of *Polixenes*, though necessary to his safety, might possibly, and not unnaturally, increase those suspicions. *Polixenes*, therefore, according to the reading which I suggest for consideration, expresses his hope that expedition may be his friend, and also preserve or perpetuate for the Queen her share in her husband's confidence and throne, but no part



## ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Antig.* You are abused, and by some putter on  
That will be damn'd for it; would I knew the villain,  
I would land-damn him."

Jackson's conjecture that "land-damn" means 'condemn to the punishment of being built up in the earth,' is, to say the least, not without reason. See *Tit. Andr.* Act V. Sc. 3.

"Set him breast-deep in the earth and famish him," &c.

This was justly considered the most fearful of all dooms; and was one likely to be common under the rule of so unscrupulous a despot as *Leontes*.

## ACT III. SCENE 3.

<p>"<i>Antig.</i> Did this break from her:—"Good Antigonus, 'Since fate, against thy better disposition, 'Hath made thy person for the thrower-out 'Of my poor babe, according to thine oath,— 'Places remote enough are in Bohemia: 'There weep, and leave it crying.'"</p>	<p>anon anon</p>
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Mr. Collier's folio changes "There weep," to "There wend;" which has a plausible seeming, until we remember that when *Antigonus* had this vision of *Hermione*, he was on board a ship just off the coast of Bohemia—Shakespeare's Bohemia; and that to direct him to wend to Bohemia would be very singular under the circumstances. When he abandons the child he says:





tion upon the meaning of this passage ; but the commentators have managed to do so with regard to the word "sworn," in the last line but one. *Perdita* says, and, to my apprehension, as plainly and pertinently as possible, that Prince *Florizel* in obscuring himself "with a swain's wearing," would seem, if it were not that the feast justified the costume, to have sworn to shew her, a swain's daughter, a reflex of her own condition, as if in a mirror, and, consequently, the difference between her actual position and his. Mr. Collier's MS. corrector changes "sworn" to *so worn*, forgetting that "you" (*i. e. Florizel*) would then be the antecedent of *worn*. Hanmer and Singer read, most tamely, *swoon*. But no change is needed ; and therefore none is sufferable.

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"Cam.                      He tells her something  
That makes her blood look on't. Good sooth she is  
The queen of curds and cream."

This is the text of the original ; and it would seem that nothing could be plainer to one able to understand the phraseology of Shakespeare at all. *Camillo* says that *Florizel* tells *Perdita* something that calls her blood to look on it :—a vivid and beautiful figure to express the sudden mounting of the blood into a maiden's cheek at the words of her lover. If a change were needed, Theobald's "look out" would be unexceptionable. The change in Mr. Collier's folio,

"He tells her something  
That wakes her blood. Look on't!"

is insufferable.

"*Serv.* He hath songs, for man, or woman, of all sizes; no milliner can so fit his costumers with gloves; he has the prettiest love-song for maids; so without bawdry, which is strange; with delicate burdens of *dildos* and *fadings*; *jump her and thump her*; and where some stretch-mouth'd rascal would, as it were, mean mischief, and break a foul gap into the matter, he makes the maid to answer, *Whoop, do me no harm, good man*; puts him off, slights him, with. *Whoop, do me no harm, good man.*"

"Fadings" is thought to mean a kind of dance; but taking the subsequent context as an indication of the *Servant's* idea of delicate burdens, and songs without bawdry, we may fairly conclude that "*dildos* and *fadings*" have a signification better known perhaps to city debauchees than simple rustics.

For "break a foul gap into the matter" we may safely read, with Mr. Collier's folio, "break a foul *jape* into the matter." 'Jape' is an old word for 'jest.'

---

"*Pol.* You offer him if this be so, a wrong  
Something unfilial: Reason, my son,  
Should choose himself a wife; but as good reason  
The father (all whose joy is nothing else  
But fair posterity) should hold some counsel  
In such a business."

This punctuation, which is universally followed, seems to me to be wrong. It makes *Polixenes* say, "My son, Reason should choose himself a wife." Whereas he means to say, 'it is reasonable that my son should; choose himself a wife but it is quite as reasonable that the father should have something to say in the affair.' Reason was continually used by the old writers for 'There is reason.' It seems almost needless to point this out; for the following part of the sentence—"but *as good reason* the father should have some

counsel," &c.—makes it plain. The passage should be pointed thus :

“ You offer him, if this be so, a wrong  
Something unfilial. Reason my son  
Should choose himself a wife ; but as good reason  
The father (all whose joy is nothing else  
But fair posterity) should hold some counsel  
In such a business.”

## KING JOHN.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

*"K. John.* For ere thou canst report I will be there,  
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard."

The anachronism in this and many other passages of Shakespeare has furnished ground of cavil to cavillers. But it, and others like it, are justifiable, as Mr. Knight says, on the principle of using terms and making reference to things familiar to the audience. Shakespeare never, I think, introduces anachronism in the actions of his personages.

### ACT II. SCENE 1.

*"Const.* Stay for an answer to your embassy,  
Lest unadvis'd you stain your swords with blood:  
My lord Chatillon may from England bring  
That right in peace, which here we urge in war;  
And then we shall repent each drop of blood,  
That hot rash haste so indirectly shed."

Mr. Collier's folio changes the last line to,

*"That rash, hot haste so indiscreetly shed."*

There can be no doubt of the propriety of the correction.

The *Constable* begs them to "stay for an answer," "lest *unadvised*" they stain their swords with blood; and in addition to this, the use of 'so' indicates that *indiscreetly* and not "indirectly" was the word.

"That rash, hot haste *so indirectly* shed,"

is not sense. The typographical error might easily have been made.

## SCENE 2.

"*Bast.* And this same bias, this commodity,  
This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,  
Clapp'd on the outward eye of fickle France,  
Hath drawn him from his own determined aid."

The last line is changed in Mr. Collier's folio to,

"Hath drawn him from his own determined aim."

a correction proposed by Monck Mason, and "the necessity for which," Mr. Collier says, "is not very evident." If a tithe of the changes in that volume were as imperatively demanded as this is, Mr. Collier's discovery would have done ten times the service that it has done. How could "commodity" draw France from "his own determined aid?" What was "his *own* determined aid?" The aid which he had determined to give to *Arthur*? That is not the way in which Shakespeare uses the English language. But, besides this, the previous line demands the change. Commodity,

"Clapp'd on the *outward* eye of fickle France,"

drew him from his *aim*. The outward eye is that **which is** used in taking aim ; and without that word this part of the sentence has no meaning.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Const.* O Lewis, stand fast ! the devil tempts thee here,  
In likeness of a new untrimmed bride."

We have here as fine a specimen of Warburton's peculiar fitness to comprehend and improve the text of Shakespeare as can be found throughout the *Variorum*. He remarks upon "*untrimmed* bride,"—" '*untrimmed* ' signifies *unsteady*. The term is taken from navigation." Well done, Warburton ! you deserved a mitre for that :—the Abbot of Un-reason's. Think of the coxswain of a wedding—that is, the groomsman, calling out, ' trim the bride, my lads ! keep her steady ! ' This note was too much for even Johnson's solemnity ; and with ponderous pleasantry, he remarks : " A commentator should be grave, and therefore I can read these notes with a proper severity of attention ; but the idea of *trimming* a lady to keep her *steady*, would be too risible for any power of face."

---

"*K. John.* But as we under heaven are supreme head,  
So, under him, that great supremacy,  
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold," &c.

Evidently "heaven" in the first line should be *God*, as is shown by the pronoun in the second. The correction is made in Mr. Collier's folio. The original word was evidently changed to "heaven," on account of the statute of



James I. before alluded to, while the corresponding change in the pronoun was neglected, as it was in a similar case, which I have pointed out in *Measure for Measure*, Act II. Sc. 4. Mr. Collier's folio gives *heaven* for "him" in the second line ; but needlessly and, indeed, injuriously, as it destroys the parallel between the king's tenure of power and his exercise of it. This is another marked evidence of the conjectural nature of the corrections in that folio. The corrector having made the necessary change of "*heaven*" to *God*, either from the sight of an actor's copy of his part, from memory, or from conjecture, went on to improve the text by guess-work, and struck from it the very word which gave force to the passage.

## SCENE 3.

"*K. John.*            If the midnight bell  
Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth  
Sound on into the drowsy race of night : " &c.

As the last line has been frittered away by the editors into,

"Sound *one unto* the drowsy race of night,"

it seems plausible to read with Mr. Collier's folio, "*ear* of night," for "race of night." But all the changes are alike uncalled for. Let any one who has listened to a church clock striking twelve at midnight, and seeming as if it would never complete its solemn task, say whether,

"Sound on into the drowsy race of night,"

does not bring up the memory of his sensations more vividly than,

"Sound *one* into the drowsy *ear* of night,"

or,

"Sound *one* unto the drowsy *race* of night."

The line as it stands in the original is one of the most suggestive in all Shakespeare's works.

#### SCENE 4.

"*K. Phil.* So, by a roaring tempest on the flood,  
A whole armado of convicted sail  
Is scatter'd," &c.

For the obviously mistaken "convicted," Mr. Dyce proposed *convected*. He came within one letter of that which is doubtless the right word,—*convented*, which is found on the margins of Mr. Collier's folio.

#### ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Arthur.* There is no malice in this burning coal."

This should evidently be

"There is no malice *burning in this* coal."

Arthur has just spoken of the fire as having *gone out*,—as being "*dead* with grief;" the transposition gives us the words and the thoughts of the author, and in such a form as is consistent with what has gone before.

[I find that Dr. Grey made this suggestion, which Monck Mason called hypercriticism, because *Hubert* says, he "can revive" the coal, and which Boswell well defended, on



the ground that, whatever really was the case, *Arthur* evidently *believed* that the coal was not burning when he spoke.

SCENE 2.

"*Pem.* If, what in rest you have, in right you hold,  
Why then your fears (which, as they say, attend  
The steps of wrong,) should move you to mew up  
Your tender kinsman, and to choke his days  
With barbarous ignorance, and deny his youth  
The rich advantage of good exercise?

A moment's consideration of the construction of this passage makes it plain that it is corrupt. As it stands, though it is pointed as a question, it is an assertion; and an assertion, too, which involves a contradiction. The obvious transposition in Mr. Collier's folio obviates all difficulty.

"Why *should* your fears (which, as they say, attend  
The steps of wrong) *then* move you to mew up,  
Your tender kinsman!" &c.

---

"*K. John.* How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds,  
Makes deeds ill done! Had'st thou not been by,  
A fellow by the hand of nature mark'd,  
Quoted, and sign'd to do a deed of shame,  
This murder had not come into my mind: "

Can any one read the whole of this passage, and question for an instant the propriety of Mr. Knight's change?

"How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds  
Makes *ill deeds* done!"

## SCENE 3.

"*Sal.* The King hath dispossess'd himself of us :  
We will not line his thin bestained cloak."

"Thin bestained cloak," is most probably a misprint for "*Sin* bestained cloak," as the corrector in Mr. Collier's folio conjectures.

—

"*Pem.* All murders past do stand excus'd in this :  
And this, so sole, and so unmatchable,  
Shall give a holiness, a purity,  
To the yet unbegotten sin of times,  
And prove a deadly bloodshed but a jest,  
Example'd by this heinous spectacle."

It is very plain to me that "the yet unbegotten sin of times" is a misprint for "the yet unbegotten *sins* of *time*," as Pope suggested. *Pembroke* says that,—all murders past stand excused in this ; and this shall excuse all other crimes to be committed. "Sin," it is true, might be used collectively ; but then at least we should read "sin of *time*." In lifting the 'matter,' the *s* was evidently transferred from one word to the other. Read :

"Shall give a holiness, a purity  
To the yet unbegotten sins of time."

## ACT V. SCENE 1.

"*Bast.* O inglorious league !  
Shall we, upon the footing of our land,  
Send fair play orders, and make compromise !"

The correction, "Send fair play *offers*," made in Mr. Collier's folio, seems to be a necessary correction of a probable misprint.

## SCENE 4.

"*Sal.* My arm shall give thee help to bear thee hence,  
For I do see the cruel pangs of death  
Right in thine eye."

Some commentators, being unable to understand "right in thine eye," proposed to read *fright*, and others "*fight* in thine eye." But, as Steevens says, "right" signifies here 'immediate.' He adds,—three quarters of a century ago,—“It is now obsolete.” But it has survived in America, and is in constant and common use in the phrase 'Right away,' for 'on the instant,' 'immediately,' which our somewhat overweening cousins sneer at, as an Americanism. The language of the best educated Americans of the Northern States is more nearly that of Shakespeare's day than that of the best born and bred English gentlemen who visit them; although the advantage on the score of utterance is generally on the side of the Englishman.

It is somewhat from the subject of this volume, but I will notice here one gross and radical error of language into which all Englishmen of the present day fall, without exception. Oxford-men and Cambridge-men speak it; and all English authors, Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Landor not excepted, write it.—They say that one thing is different *to* another. Now, this is not an idiom, or a colloquialism: it is radically, absurdly wrong. They might as well say that two things converge *from* each other. Difference implies a figurative divergence,—a motion *from*, not *to*. One thing is different *from* another. Spenser, Shakespeare,

"*York*. The king is come : deal mildly with his youth ;  
For young hot colts, being rag'd do rage the more."

Ritson substituted *rein'd* for "rag'd," and Mr. Collier's folio has *urg'd*. Mr. Singer gives preference to the former word, which is certainly much the better suited to the sense of the context. But why change the original? Is it not perfectly comprehensible and quite in Shakespeare's manner? *York* begs *Gaunt* to "deal mildly" with the young king, not to irritate or enrage him ; because

"Young hot colts being rag'd, do rage *the more*."

### ACT III. SCENE 2.

"*Scroop*. —and boys, with women's voices,  
Strive to speak big, and clap their female joints  
In stiff, unwieldy arms," &c.

As a specimen of the fitness of the editors and critics of the last century for their task, I cannot forbear quoting the following comments upon this passage :

—"and clap their female joints—] Mr. Pope more elegantly reads—'and *clasp*—;' which has been adopted by subsequent editors. But the emendation does not seem absolutely necessary."

MALONE.

"*Clip* would be still nearer than *clasp*."

RITSON.

"Lee, in his *Mithridates*, has imitated this passage, Act IV. :

"The very boys, like Cupids dress'd in arms,  
*Clap* their young harness'd thighs, and trust to battle."

STEEVENS.

Here we have four learned men, one of them a distinguished poet, unable to apprehend the graphic colloquialism of *Scroop's* relation, that boys were clapping their girlish limbs into armor, to fight against the king. Steevens' grave statement that Lee imitated this passage, in saying that boys clapped their thighs, has more food for laughter in it than most of his jokes have.

## SCENE 4.

"*Queen.* And I could sing, would weeping do me good,  
And never borrow any tear of thee."

Pope changed "sing," which is the reading of all the old copies, into *weep*, and he has been followed by all his successors, except Mr. Knight. Why? The *Queen's* attendant offers to sing, and, the *Queen* replying that she would rather that she should weep, answers,

"I could weep, madam, would it do you good."

The *Queen* rejoins, that, 'if weeping were of any service she had wept enough to be able to sing herself.' Thus plainly says the text; and what reason is there for changing it?

## ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Car.* O forbid it God,  
That, in a Christian climate," &c.

Thus the authentic folio; but all the editors give "O, *forfend* it." Why? Because, Mr. Knight says, "we cling to the less common word." Of course we do. Is there

not Mr. Justice *Shallow's* authority for it ? “ Good phrases are surely, and ever were, very commendable.” But Shakespeare had no respect for less common words, as such ; and so he makes the Bishop say “ forbid,” even in the solemn opening of this speech. There is not a single instance in his authentic works, in which he uses ‘ forfend.’ Unlike his editors, he clings to the more common word.

## KING HENRY IV. PART I.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*K. Hen.* No more the thirsty entrance of this soil  
Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood."

"The thirsty entrance of this soil," has given much trouble to the editors and critics, who perpetrate three pages of comment and conjecture upon it, in the *Variorum* Edition. Monck Mason's ingenious substitution of *Erinnys* for "entrance," is set aside by Boswell, Knight, and Collier. Steevens, Mason and Knight quote Virgil, Lucan, and Ovid in favor of the correction. The following lines, from an English contemporary and townsman of Shakespeare, seem to me to be much more to the purpose :

"Spightfull ERINNIS frights Me with her Lookes,  
My man-hood dares not with foule ATE mell,  
I quake to looke on HECAT's charming Bookes," &c.  
*Drayton's Sonnets*, No. 39. Ed. 1619.

These sonnets were first published in 1594, under the title *Idea's Mirrour, Amours in Quatorzains* : The first part of *Henry IV.* was written in 1596 or 1597. This, to show that Shakespeare was not obliged to go to Lucan, Virgil, or Ovid for the name or the functions of Erinnyes.

But there is not the slightest justification for a change in the original text. Steevens perceived the obvious meaning, but true to the spirit of his day, shirked it. He says :—  
 “Shakespeare *may* mean the *thirsty entrance* of the soil for the *porous surface* of the earth, through which all moisture enters, and is thirstily drunk or soaked up.” Nothing could be plainer or more pertinent.

---

“*K. Hen.* Ten thousand bold Scots, two and twenty knights  
 Balk'd in their own blood, did Sir Walter see  
 On Holmedon's plains.”

How can there be the least hesitation in changing the obvious misprint “balk'd” for *bath'd*, which is at once the word for which it would be most easily mistaken, and that which would most naturally occur in the passage ?

### SCENE 3.

“*Northum.* Why, what a wasp-stung and impatient fool  
 Art thou, to break into this woman's mood,” &c.

This, the reading of the first quarto, seems to me unquestionably the true one. The later editions give *wasp-tongue* instead of “wasp-stung ;” a phrase, which in this place, seems to me to be utterly without meaning, but which is construed by Malone to mean “having a tongue as peevish and mischievous as a wasp.” But this makes the Earl call his son “a wasp-tongue and an impatient fool,” which is not a Shakesperian or an admissible mode of joining epithets. The advocates of *wasp-tongue* evidently suppose it, as well as “impatient,” to be an adjective belong-



ing to "fool;" but in that case it would have been 'wasp-tongued.' It is needless to point out the particular parts of *Hotspur's* conduct in this scene which justify his father in likening him to one stung by a wasp. The confusion of these epithets is the easiest imaginable. It is difficult to discriminate in speech between 'wasp-stung' and 'wasp-tongue,' and not difficult to mistake them for each other in manuscript. .

ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Gads*. I am joined with no foot land-rakers, &c., but with nobility and tranquillity &c., burgomasters and great-oneyers."

Mr. Collier's folio changes "tranquillity" to *sanguinity*, which is beneath notice, and "great-oneyers" to *great ones*—*yes*, which is quite as bad, but which attracts some attention because the word has given work to the editors and commentators. The obvious signification of the original word seems to me to be 'great ones' for which "great oneyers" is a vulgarism. It is common enough to hear '*ers*' appended to words by those who are altogether without intelligence and education; and it is quite natural that *Gads-hill* should affect their phrase under the circumstances. This view was ably advocated in *Blackwood's Magazine* (Sept. 1853). But why should so obvious a construction need advocacy? Answer, Commentators of the Augustan age.

SCENE 4.

"*P. Hen*. ———and when you breathe in your watering they cry—hem! and bid you play it off."

By a perhaps laudable, but certainly much overstrained effort for delicacy, "breathe in your watering," is interpret-

ed to mean to 'take breath in your drinking.' But in Shakespeare's day, as well as in Henry IV.'s, not much water was drunk, especially in taverns ; and why should the drawers cry "hem !" in such a case, and commend the drinker to "play it off ?" "Watering," evidently does not refer to the absorption of fluid, or "breathe" to the inspiration of air. The obvious signification of the passage is the just one, and that which is most in keeping with the characters alluded to, particularly at the time of Shakespeare.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Mort.* I understand thy looks : that pretty Welsh  
Which thou pours't down from these swelling heavens."

The substitution of *welling* for "swelling" in Mr. Collier's folio, is pretty and plausible ; but I am far from being confident as to the necessity for a change.

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"*Glend.* She bids you on the wanton rushes lay you down."

This line was altered by Steevens to,

"She bids you  
*Upon* the wanton rushes lay you down."

The alteration has been generally followed ; and upon the lines in this condition, Coleridge remarks, that "the imperfect line 'She bids you,' is one of those fine hair strokes of exquisite judgment peculiar to Shakespeare ;—thus detaching the lady's speech, and giving it the indivi-

duality and entireness of a little poem, while he draws attention to it." Perhaps such an arrangement would have been a stroke of exquisite judgment, had Shakespeare made it; though that is not so obvious to me, even after Coleridge's setting forth; but Shakespeare did not make it. The arrangement is a mere mechanical consequence of Steevens' finger-counting propensity. It is amusing to see the great critic deceived, with his dwarf predecessors and successors, into giving Shakespeare credit for that which was not in his thought. We may all take warning from it.

Malone says that "the old copies" give the line,

"She bids you on the wanton rushes lay you down,"

and Mr. Knight, that "all the old copies give this as one line." They are both wrong. It is one line in all the quartos; but it appears in the first folio, and also in the second, thus:

*"Glend. She bids you,  
On the wanton Rushes lay you downe."*

This seems at first to favor Coleridge's fancy; but it does not, in reality. For there is conclusive evidence that the text of the folio was printed from that of one of the later quartos. The break in the line was merely for typographical convenience. Steevens' printing of the passage,

*"She bids you  
Upon the wanton rushes," &c.,*

was not justified by the folio, and, upon his own confession, was an arbitrary arrangement.

## SCENE 3.

"*Fal.* —but the sack that thou hast drunk me would have bought me lights as good cheap at the dearest chandler's in Europa."

The commentators give various instances of the use of the phrase "good cheap" for 'a low price;' but none of them seem to me to be so pertinent as the following, from the old Morality *Hycke-Scorner* :

"*Pre-wyll.* Even now and ye go thyder, ye shal fynde a grete hepe, And you speke in my name, ye shal have good chepe."

## ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Hot.* —to set so rich a main  
On the nice hazard of one doubtful hour!  
It were not good: for therein should we read  
The very bottom and the soul of hope:  
The very list, the very utmost bound  
Of all our fortunes."

There has been much perplexity caused by the word "read" in this passage. Some say "read" means 'to see,' others that it is used in its old signification 'to discover or unravel,' as, 'A rede my riddle.' But is it well to speak of either seeing or discovering by a *desperate battle* "the bottom and the soul of hope, the *list* and *utmost bound* of fortune?" In case of such a battle, the bottom and the soul of hope, the list and utmost bound of fortune, are not seen, not discovered, not read; but they are *reached*. "Reade," as the word stands in the folio, is an evident and a very easy misprint for *reach*. In much manuscript *ch* resembles even *d*; and in more than half of that which goes to the

press, even nowadays, it could be determined only by the context whether the author meant *ch* or *de*. Read therefore :

—"for therein should we *reach*  
The very bottom and the soul of hope;  
The very list, the very utmost bound  
Of all our fortunes."

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"*Hot.* Come let us make a muster speedily."

The folio and two of the early quartos read "*take a muster,*" and though the misprint would seem obvious, both Mr. Knight and Mr. Collier retain it. They probably forgot the following lines, in the *Induction* of Part II.

"And who but Rumour, who but only I,  
*Make fearful musters,* and prepar'd defence?"

## KING HENRY IV. PART II.

### ACT I. SCENE 2.

"*Fal.* Let him be damned like the glutton! may his tongue be hotter!  
—A whoreson Achitophel! a rascally yea-forsooth knave; to bear a gentleman in hand, and then stand upon security!—"

*Falstaff*—let not my readers fear yet another essay on the theme,—*Falstaff* is regarded by many as a character, the traits of which are too delicate to admit of its perfectly successful embodiment on the stage; but Mr. Hackett's performance in *Henry IV.* is the best answer to such objectors. Well may he say: "That the character was designed for stage effect, is evident from his many practically dramatic situations, and the idea that it is beyond the reach of histrionic art to represent him properly, can only originate in a hypercritical and fantastic imagination." \* Few of those who see Mr. Hackett play *Falstaff*, indeed, very few, can discreetly venture to criticise his embodiment of the part, so patiently, so profoundly and so reverently has he studied this master-creation of Shakespeare. There is hardly a gesture, or an expression of countenance, hardly an inflection of voice, even in the most subordinate parts of the play, which is not the fruit of careful investigation of the character and the scene, or

\* *Falstaff*: a Shakesperian Tract, London, 8vo. 1840.

which, if intuitive, has not borne the scrutiny of such investigation. And yet how gracefully and perfectly knit together is the whole ! How spontaneously the wit seems to spring when occasion calls it forth ! With what freedom and consciousness of power are the broad dashes of humor made ! How bold the lies ! How ready every reply ! How sudden and how genuine the anger ! How sneaking the cowardice ! How palpable, yet how well graduated the grossness ! How fascinating, and yet how detestable the whole character !

I will not thrust my own ideas upon such a character before my readers ; but they cannot be indifferent to the written thoughts of one who, in his embodiment of it, has attained a distinction so honorable to the art of his country. From some MS. Shakesperian Notes kindly lent to me, between six and seven years ago, when I, as little as he, had any thought that I should make such a use of them, I copied this brief but suggestive record of Mr. Hackett's view of the character.

"Shakespeare has invested that philosophic compound of vice and sensuality with no amiable or tolerable quality to gloss or cover his moral deformity, except a surpassingly brilliant and charming wit, and a spontaneous and irresistible flow of humor. But *Falstaff* is premeditative in some of his wit—as for instance when he endeavors to escape detection in the lies he has told the *Prince* and *Poins* about their attack after the robbery—seriously irascible, touchy, fretful, sometimes grave ; on some occasions his mirth *breaks out*, and is marked with strong contrast to his usual deportment. He is of cynical temperament, feels the infirmity of age weighing upon him, has a mental as well as bodily obesity."

On one point I differ with Mr. Hackett ; although it is one which has been frequently mooted with regard to his

*Falstaff*, and which he must consequently have considered carefully, and on which he yet retains his first conception. *Falstaff*, according to my reading of the part, should be a gentleman ; Mr. Hackett does not think so, and relies on the fat knight's meanness, falsehood, knavery, grossness, and cowardice, to sustain his rendering. Granted, all this. *Falstaff* does do, is continually doing, many things of which no gentleman should be guilty. Still he was by birth and breeding a gentleman, and we cannot imagine him at any time to have altogether lost the consciousness or laid aside the outward manifestations that he was such. I refer, not to gentlemanly impulses, for he had none of these, but to that consciousness which arises from position, and from intercourse with those who have it, and which always has its effect upon the individual who possesses it, as well as upon those with whom he is brought in contact. There are men now among us, even in these days, who have all of *Falstaff's* vices, without his wit ; and who, though therefore excluded from society, are yet, on account of their position and breeding, recognized as gentlemen by their associates, and with whom one could not be in company five minutes without discovering their right to be so recognized. Mr. Hackett must himself have met such men ; and I wonder that he has not seen that *Falstaff* was one of their kidney.

*Falstaff* shows his own consciousness of his position in the few lines which are quoted at the head of this section ; for, in the spirit of the 15th century and of Shakespeare's day, he thinks it presumption in a tradesman "to bear a gentleman in hand, and then stand upon security." His pretensions are not based upon the merely adventitious honor of knighthood, but evidently upon birth, position, and breeding. Therefore, though sensual to grossness, and selfish to meanness, he should not only be courteous to the *Prince* in spite of the *Prince's* familiarity with him, and show



something of the condescension which is implied in affability, when he himself is familiar with his inferiors, but should exhibit a certain courtliness of manner, which, in spite of all his vile qualities, would leave that impress of gentility upon those around him, which he evidently does make, and which is shown in his influence over his humbler companions, especially the females among them.

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"*Fal.* —A man can no more separate age and covetousness, than he can part young limbs and lechery: but the gout galls the one, and the pox pinches the other; and so both the degrees prevent my curse.—"

"Degrees," in *Falstaff's* speech is quite surely a misprint for *diseases*, which is substituted for it in Mr. Collier's folio.

#### ACT II. SCENE 1.

The *Hostess*, in the original, says, "A 100 marke is a long one for a poore lone woman to beare." She doubtless should say, "a long *score*," as Mr. Collier's MS. corrector conjectures. In the first part of her complaint she says,

"I warrant he is an infinite thing upon my score."

#### ACT III. SCENE 3.

"*Fal.* —and now is this Vice's dagger become a squire."

Long and tedious are the disputes about the etymology of this word "Vice." But there can hardly be a question that it is simply 'vice,' i. e. *vitium*, in the ordinary sense of

the term, applied to a malevolent, or at least a mischievous character on the old stage. The character bore a dagger, as *Harlequin* bears and has ever borne a sword of lath.

#### ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*West.*                    If that rebellion  
Came like itself, in base and abject routs,  
Led on by bloody youth, guarded with rage,  
And countenanc'd by boys and beggary."

"Rage" has here no meaning, and is shown by the context to be a misprint for *rags*, to which it is changed in Mr. Collier's folio.

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"*West.*                    You, lord archbishop,—  
Whose see is by a civil peace maintain'd:  
Whose beard the silver hand of peace hath touch'd;  
Whose learning and good letters peace hath tutor'd;  
Whose white investments figure innocence,  
The dove and very blessed spirit of peace,—  
Wherefore do you so ill translate yourself,  
Out of the speech of peace, that bears such grace,  
Into the harsh and boist'rous tongue of war!  
Turning your books to graves, your ink to blood,  
Your pens to lances, and your tongue divine  
To a loud trumpet, and a point of war!"

This is the reading of all the recent editions. But can any one read the whole speech, remember that the *Archbishop* had personally taken up arms, and doubt for a moment that "graves" is a misprint for *greaves*, as Steevens pointed out, and that we should read,

"Turning your books to *greaves*, your ink to blood!"

The change in Mr. Collier's folio of "a point of war" to "*report of war*" is insufferable. "A point of war" is as intelligible as a point of etiquette or a point of law. Sir Walter Scott makes a trumpeter, in *Old Mortality*, I believe, blow "a point of war."

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"*Archb.* He cannot *so* precisely weed this land  
As his misdoubts present occasion.  
His foes are *so* enrooted with his friends,  
That plucking to unfix an enemy,  
He doth unfasten *so* and shake a friend,  
So that this land, like an offensive wife," &c.

It is with great reluctance that I even suggest any change in the text of the original folio, when it is at all comprehensible; but I believe that "He doth unfasten *so*," is a misprint for "He doth unfasten *too*." The phrase, as it stands, may be construed so as to make the two lines mean, "That plucking to unfix an enemy, he doth thus unfasten and shake a friend." But this is not consistent with the intent of the passage, in which the *Archbishop* says, that *Henry's* foes are "enrooted *with* his friends;" so, that,—like the sower in the parable of the tares and the wheat, to which the allusion is plain,—he cannot pluck up one without rooting out the other at the same time. The tares and the wheat in the one case, the enemy and the friend in the other, would be displaced *together*. I believe that Shakespeare wrote,—that he could not have avoided writing :

"His foes are *so* enrooted with his friends,  
That plucking to unfix an enemy,  
He doth unfasten *too*, and shake a friend."

I do not believe that Shakespeare would have strung

these *so*s thus needlessly after each other ; and I know from some years experience of the chances of the composing-room, that where there are three *so*s in six lines, the first two being in the middle of the lines, that *too*, coming directly under these first, would very probably be set up *so*, and so make the fourth.

## KING HENRY V.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*West.* They know your grace hath cause and means and might:  
So hath your highness; never king of England  
Had nobler riches."

There are disputes about this passage, and corrections proposed; and Coleridge's way of making the passage clear by emphasis, "So *hath* your highness," is announced as a discovery!—How is it possible that any other reading could have been thought of! It is that which was always from my boyhood spontaneous with me in reading the phrase itself; but in connection with the last part of the passage—"never king of England," &c.,—it seems impossible to think of any other. [On examination of the *Variorum* Edition, I find that Coleridge was not the first to record this very obvious interpretation, though he ventures it as a suggestion, saying, "*Perhaps* these lines ought to be recited dramatically thus," and though Mr. Collier and Mr. Knight in their recent editions attribute the discovery to him. But Malone had written thus before Coleridge was well out of the nursery:

"So *hath* your highness;" i. e. your highness hath indeed what they think and know you have.

*Variorum* Edition, vol. xvii. p. 274.

"*Exeter*. For government, though high, and low, and lower,  
Put into parts, doth keep in one consent  
Congruing in a full and natural close,  
Like music."

In *Blackwood's Magazine* (Sept. 1853) it is speciously proposed to read *through* for "though." "Surely," says the writer, "'though' ought to be *through*. 'For government, put into parts, like a piece of music, doth keep in one consent or harmony, *through* high, and low, and lower,' &c." Surely not. Such a change would take away the very point of the speech. The Bishop says that government doth keep in one consent, is harmonious, *though* constructed of various parts, high, low, and lower; just as a piece of music, *though* written in many parts, is harmonious, because all those parts move together and have proper relations to each other. He refers to the differing functions of the "armed hand" and the "advised head," which are to be discharged in concert.

"While that the armed hand doth fight abroad,  
The advised head defends itself at home;  
For government, though high, and low, and lower,  
Put into parts, doth keep in one consent:  
Congruing in a full and natural close,  
Like music."

The insertion of one letter would spoil all this.

#### ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Pist.* O braggard vile, and damned furious wight!  
The grave doth gape, and doting death is near;  
Therefore exhale!"

Malone says, "'Exhale,' I believe, here signifies to

*draw*, or in *Pistol's* language, *hale* or *lug out* ;” and *Steevens* responds “ ‘Therefore exhale’ means only ‘therefore breathe your last or die ;’ ” and no one says them nay. ‘Exhale’ means ‘begone,’ ‘clear out,’ ‘vanish.’ *Pistol* attempts to bully *Nym*, and tells him that “the grave doth gape” for him, and therefore he must ‘make himself scarce,’ ‘exhale,’ or, as a Yankee *Pistol* would have it, ‘evaporate.’

## SCENE 2.

“*K. Hen.* Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,  
That knew’st the very bottom of my soul,  
That almost might’st have coined me into gold,  
Wouldst thou have practised on me for thy use !”

I think that the interrogation point at the end of this passage is wrongly placed there. There should be a period. The *King* would hardly call *Scroop's* killing him, ‘practising on him for his use.’ *Henry* is enumerating all the close relations which had existed between him and his treacherous friend, and tells him that he bore the key of his counsels, knew the bottom of his soul, and might have coined him into gold, *if he would* have practised on him for his use,—that is, used his influence unduly for his own advantage ; and the *King* then goes on to ask, this being the case,

“Might it be possible that foreign hire  
Could out of thee extract one spark of evil  
That might annoy my finger !”

## SCENE 3.

“*Quick.* Nay, sure, he’s not in hell ; he’s in Arthur’s bosom, if ever

man went to Arthur's bosom. 'A made a finer end, and went away, an it had been any christom child; 'a parted even just between twelve and one, e'en at turning o' the tide; for after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and 'a babbled of green fields.

Mr. Collier's folio for "'a babbled of green fields," gives *on a table of green frieze*. This is the unkindest cut of all. Unkind? it is cruel. If Mr. Collier even made the announcement of the change without a pang, his heart must be harder than the nether millstone.

In the original the passage is misprinted "*a table of green fields*." This, by a most felicitous conjecture of Theobald's, was changed to "'a babbled of green fields," which reading is not only excellent in itself, but conforms to the style of the context immediately following:—

"*Nym*. They say, he cried out of sack.

*Quick*. Ay, that 'a did.

*Bard*. And of women.

*Quick*. Nay, that 'a did not.

*Boy*. Yes, that 'a did; and said, they were devils incarnate.

*Quick*. 'A could never abide carnation: 'twas a color he never liked.

*Boy*. 'A said once, the devil would have him about women.

*Quick*. 'A did in some sort, indeed, handle women: but then he was rheumatick; and talked of the whore of Babylon.

But the emendation in Mr. Collier's folio, atrocious as it is, has found indorsers, one of whom thus speaks, though reluctant and ashamed, in *Blackwood's Magazine* (Sept. 1853):

"Our reasons are—*first*, the calenture, which causes people to rave about green fields, is a distemper peculiar to *sailors* in hot climates; *secondly*, Falstaff's mind seems to have been running more on sack than on green fields, as Dame Quickly admits



further on in the dialogue; *thirdly*, however pleasing the supposition about his babbling of green fields may be, it is still more natural that Dame Quickly, whose attention was fixed on the sharpness of his nose set off against a countenance already darkening with the discoloration of death, should have likened it to the sharpness of a pen relieved against a table, or background, of green frieze."

The first reason refers to Theobald's justification of his emendation, on the ground that when people are delirious with a calenture—an intense fever, "their heads run on green fields." But what need of all this talk about calenture, sack, and discolored faces? *Falstaff* had been a boy, like any other man,—a merry boy surely, and an innocent one perhaps; and now, as the end of his ill-spent life rapidly approaches, amid his confused ravings about the dreadful future and the ill-spent past, come up visions of the green and sunlit meadows over which he chased his childhood's happy hours. There is not in so few words a passage of such tearful pathos in the language, as this, which shows a reflected gleam of pure and childish joy, piercing the gloom of the mortal hour of such a man as *Falstaff*.

#### ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Pist.* The *fico* for thee."

This can hardly be ordinary use of the word fig, as in 'I don't care a fig!'—Douce to the contrary notwithstanding. *Pistol* would then have said "*a fico* for thee." He evidently means "the fig of Spain," of which he speaks before—Act III., Scene 6.

## SCENE 3.

"*K. Hen.* Mark, then, abounding valour in our English;  
That, being dead, like to the bullet's grazing,  
Break out into a second course of mischief,  
Killing in relapse of mortality."

Mr. Collier's folio reads "*rebounding valour*," and Mr. Collier defends it, failing, it would seem, to see the pun which Shakespeare puts into *Henry's* mouth, and which the emendation destroys. Strangely enough this word is a stumbling block to the *Variorum* men, who read *a bounding* and *abundant*.

## SCENE 4.

"*Fr. Sol. Est il impossible d'echapper la force de ton bras?*  
*Pist. Brass, cur!*"

Two pages of blunders inconceivable are perpetrated upon *Pistol's* reply by the commentators in the *Variorum* Edition. Sir William Rawlinson leads off after this fashion:—

"'Brass, cur!'—Either Shakespeare had very little knowledge in the French language, or his over-fondness for punning led him, in this place, contrary to his own judgment, into an error. Almost every one knows that the French word *bras* is pronounced *brau*; and what resemblance of sound does this bear to *brass*, that Pistol should reply, 'Brass, cur?' The joke would appear to a reader, but could scarce be discovered in the performance of the play."

Samuel Johnson, LL. D., follows thus:

"If the pronunciation of the French language be not changed since Shakespeare's time, which is not unlikely, it may be suspected that some other man wrote the French scenes.

Samuel Farmer, D.D., who decided on the no-learning of Shakespeare, sustains his brother Doctor, the lexicographer and great moralist. Malone says that "the word *bras* was, without doubt, pronounced, in the last age, and by the English who understood French, as at present, *braw*;" and as to that language, he thinks Shakespeare's "knowledge of it was very slight." Douce has sense enough to see the triviality of the controversy, but passes the same judgment. And all this, because these very learned men did not know the first elements of French pronunciation, and Shakespeare did. The "English who understood French" in Malone's day, may have pronounced *bras* like *braw*; and from the remarks which Frenchmen make upon the pronunciation of their language by the English, this was very probably the case; but Frenchmen, and all Americans who have any pretence to French scholarship, pronounce *bras* as *brah*, which is surely similar enough in sound to "brass" for a stage pun upon the words.

## KING HENRY VI. PART I.

### ACT III. SCENE 2.

"*Bur.* Warlike and martial Talbot, Burgundy  
Enshrines thee in his heart."

For the tautological "Warlike and Martiall *Talbot*" of the original, Mr. Collier's folio plausibly suggests, "Warlike and *matchless* Talbot."

### ACT IV. SCENE 5.

"*Young Tal.* You fled for vantage, every one will swear ;  
But if I bow, they'll say it was for fear."

For "bow" Mr. Singer proposes *flew*, instigated thereto by a MS. correction on the margin of a copy of the second folio in his possession. But did Mr. Singer ever see 'flew' used as the præterite of 'fly,' meaning 'to run away?' If I do not err, 'flew' is exclusively confined to the action of wings, except when it is used figuratively, to picture rapidity and eagerness of motion, as, 'he flew to her relief,' 'the soldiers flew to arms.' But when we wish to say, in English, that a man ran away, we say that he 'fled.'

As for instance, "Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet;" \* it would hardly do to say that Sisera "*flew* away on his feet." There is not an instance in all the Bible or in Shakespeare of such a use of the word, often as there is occasion for it, if it were English; and indeed both Bible and Shakespeare do not together furnish a dozen instances of the use of the word in any sense.

## ACT V. SCENE 4.

"York. Speak, Winchester; for boiling choler chokes  
The hollow passage of my poison'd voice."

Can there be any doubt that "poison'd," is a misprint for *prison'd*, as Pope suggested? I think that it should have been received into the text; and cannot imagine a reason for its rejection.

\* Judges, iv. 15.

## KING HENRY VI. PART II.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Glos.* And hath his highness in his infancy  
Crowned in Paris in despite of foes!"

Steevens obviated the difficulty in these lines, by reading,

"And hath his highness in his infancy  
*Been crown'd* in Paris," &c.,

which is the generally received text. Mr. Collier laudably endeavors to avoid so great a change as the insertion of a word and the elision of a syllable, by reading,

"And *was* his highness in his infancy  
Crowned," &c.

But this change, though better, is almost equally great. It seems plain to me that for 'hath' we should read *had*. *King Henry*, when he ascended the throne, was not only a minor, but a child of tender years, under the guardianship of *Gloster* and *Beaufort*, who, from motives of policy, *had him crowned* in France as king of France. *Gloster*, enumerating all that he and his uncle have done to preserve the kingdom of France to the English crown, asks,

"Or hath [have] mine uncle Beaufort and myself  
 With all the learned council of the realm  
*Studied* so long, *sat* in the council house  
 Early and late, debating to and fro  
 How France and Frenchmen might be kept in awe,  
 And *had* his highness, in his infancy,  
 Crowned in Paris, in despite of foes!  
 And shall these labours and these honours die?" &c.

That is, 'have we studied, and sat in council, and had his highness crowned in Paris, only to lose our labor?'

## SCENE 3.

*Enter Peter, and others, with Petitions.*

1 *Pet.* My masters, let's stand close; my lord protector will come *this* way by and by, and then we may deliver our supplications in the quill.

Thus this passage stands in all editions; but "in the quill" is obscure. Mr. Singer and Mr. Dyce suggest "in the *quoil*," i. e., 'in the coil, or confusion,' which is quite possibly the needful word. "In the *sequel*," proposed in Mr. Collier's folio, only shows the poverty of the resources, external and internal, of the proposer.

## ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Cap.* Cut both the villains' throats;—for die you shall  
 The lives of those which we have lost in fight  
 Be counterpoised with such a petty sum."

This passage, evidently corrupt, was amended by reading the last line,

"*Cannot* be counterpoised with such a petty sum;"

but Mr. Collier's folio, in reading,

"Can lives of those which we have lost in fight  
Be counterpoised with such a petty sum!"

does less violence to the text, and avoids the addition of a redundant foot to the line.

#### SCENE 8.

"*Cliff.* What say ye countrymen, will ye relent  
And yield to mercy, whilst 'tis offered you,  
Or let a rabble lead you to your deaths!"

For "rabble" Mr. Collier's folio substitutes *rebel*, meaning *Cade*. The change is plausible, and is defended by Mr. Collier on the ground that "the speaker was addressing the rabble, and would hardly ask whether they would allow themselves to lead themselves to their own deaths." But how many of the crowd would suppose that *they* were meant by the "rabble?" Perhaps Shakespeare meant that *Clifford* should display a more thorough knowledge of human nature than his MS. corrector and his advocate have shown.

— p. 336.

#### CORRECTION.

"In the quill" (Act I. Sc. 3) was never obscure to me, until I read the commentators on Shakespeare. They made the confusion for me, as they have for many others. I always understood the phrase as meaning, 'in writing;' and such, I am convinced, is its plain signification. The original text should not be disturbed.



## KING HENRY VI. PART III.

### ACT II. SCENE 5.

*"Father. And so obsequious will thy Father be,  
Men for the losse of thee, hauing no more,  
As Priam was for all his Valiant Sonnes."*

The obvious error in the second line was of course seen long ago ; and all our editions have, on the suggestion of Rowe,

*"Sad for the loss of thee, having no more," &c.*

This emendation seems to have been made on the principle that the word substituted should be as unlike that in the original as the sense will allow. Mr. Dyce makes the obviously well-founded suggestion that "men" was a misprint for *e'en*. Read

*"E'en for the loss of thee," &c.*

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

*"K. Hen. Let me embrace the sower Aduersaries ;  
For Wise men say, it is the wisest course."*

This passage, which stands thus corruptly in the folio, and does not occur in the quarto copies of *The Contention of the Two famous Houses of Lancaster and Yorke*, is usually printed,

"Let me embrace *these* sour adversities," &c.

Mr. Dyce, however, proposes,

"Let me embrace *thee* sour adversitie," &c.,

which obtains a finer reading at the expense of less variation from the original text.

#### ACT IV. SCENE 8.

"*K. Hen.* My mildness hath allayed their swelling griefs,  
My mercy dried their water-flowing tears."

"Water-flowing" tears seems somewhat tautological, and to be so natural a misprint for the appropriate phrase, "*bitter-flowing* tears," suggested by Mr. Collier's folio, that I was at first inclined to accept the amendment. But I was soon ashamed of my vacillation; for reflection is hardly necessary to make it evident that "water-flowing tears" are tears that flow like water.

## KING RICHARD III.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Glos.* Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun of York," &c.

What reader of Shakespeare, on being present for the first time at the performance of *Richard III.*, is not shocked and bewildered by the long first Scene of that droll piece of mosaic work which the managers facetiously announce as William Shakespeare's Tragedy. I shall never forget my youthful surprise, which gave place to wrath, merging gradually to sullenness, and finally veering round to laughter. I did not know that the *Richard III.* of the stage was a hodge-podge manufactured by Cibber, partly from Shakespeare's *Richard III.*, partly from *Henry V.*, partly from *Henry VI.*, and partly from emanations of the Ciberian mind. A perusal of Hazlitt's criticism afterwards enlightened me as to the structure of the acting play,—if that can be called structure which has neither plan nor coherence—before Shakespeare's works had become to me an object of critical study.

The editor of the *Modern Standard Drama*, remarks, in demurring to Hazlitt's strictures: "We suspect that old Cibber was, after all, a better judge than his more philosophical critic, of the ingredients that go to make up a

good acting play." But the question put at issue is, not whether Cibber knew better than Hazlitt how to make a good acting play, but whether Cibber knew better than Shakespeare how to bring on and develope Shakespeare's characters. With all deference to Garrick and the "popular audiences" whom the alterations were made to please, to Cibber who made them, and to Mr. Sargent who endorses them, I think that Shakespeare knew best. Stage effect is another matter; something which did not exist in Shakespeare's time any more than instrumentation in Handel's; and Garrick or Mr. Kemble might properly change it in any manner according with good taste, as Mozart put the wind score to the *Messiah*. But the latter would have had as much right to cut out half a dozen bars from each piece in the *Messiah*, and to supply their places with something from *Judas Maccabeus*, or *Acis & Galatea*, or with music of his own, as Cibber to make up *Richard III.* of *Henry VI.*, *Henry V.*, and his own "worse than needless additions," as Hazlitt calls them.

The prosing *Henry* delays the action of the play, and is a most useless excrescence upon it,—a huge and cumbersome dramatic wart upon the fair proportions of the piece. Shakespeare was adequate to the task he undertook; and did just what he meant to do when he introduced Gloster's soliloquy so abruptly. The excuse for having a Scene before it, that "it would be spoiled in the representation, in the noise and confusion which must usually attend the first rising of the curtain," is most lame. Such commotion instantly subsides at the sound of the actor's voice; and what greater commotion could there be than the applause which greets the actor who plays *Richard*, as he steps upon the stage. The worst interpolation of Cibber is the speech put in the mouth of *Richard* after he falls: "Perdition seize thine arm," &c. It is the worst, because it is entire-

ly inconsistent with *Gloster's* character. He is an unmitigated villain, having nothing noble about him, and nothing admirable but his knowledge of human nature and his inflexible will. His ambition is not the fruit of a soaring spirit, but of the hate he bears mankind ; for, be it observed, *Richard* loves no man. He seeks the crown not because it will make him great, but because it will make others grovel. He is completely selfish, looking upon those around him merely as tools which he can or cannot use, and utterly remorseless, caring not if he destroy them in using them. He is not a sturdy, open usurper, with whom we might have some sympathy while condemning him ; but a mean, sneaking hypocrite, an intriguer, a stabber, and a poisoner, who indeed has courage enough to fight when necessary, and skill and prudence enough to fight well ; but though born in chivalric days, he fights with no chivalric feeling. He has no honesty himself, and recognizes none in others. To reach his throne, he commits six murders with as little compunction as he would tread on as many spiders ; and when there, is too mean to pay to him who helped him there, the petty price of his treachery. Such is the man whom Cibber, not Shakespeare, would cause to say, when dying, to his victor :

"But oh! the vast renown thou hast acquir'd  
In conquering Richard, does afflict him more  
Than even his body's parting with his soul."

Shakespeare's *Richard* would have yielded renown an hundredfold greater than his own, yes, and have done any mean thing, with knowledge that it would be published to the world, if by doing so he could have retained his crown and his life.

Many passages necessary to the perfect understanding of the character,—such as *Gloster's* defence of himself to the

Queen and her friends, his speech to the lords which results in the death of *Hastings*, his conversation with the Lieutenant of the Tower when asking admission to *Clarence*, and others, together with some of the finest poetical passages of the play,—such as *Clarence's* dream, the description of the murder of the Princes, and the Queen's address to the Tower,—are cut out, as not being fitted for “an acting play,” forsooth. Cannot this be remedied? I do not agree with Hazlitt in his opinion that these passages may judiciously be omitted. The only reason which he assigns, that he should “be loth to trust them in the mouth of almost any actor,” would be equally well urged against the finest passage in this or any other play. It may be a good reason for excluding Shakespeare's works entirely from the stage; but it cannot justify their mutilation.

### ACT I. SCENE 3.

“*Q. Mary.* Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog,  
Thou that wast seal'd in thy nativity  
The slave of nature and the son of Hell.”

Could epithets be better applied than those in the last of these three lines? And yet all manner of contrivance is used to avoid calling *Gloster* “the slave of nature:”—as for instance, “the *shame* of nature,” “the *scorn* of nature,” and “the *stain* of nature.” But “the slave of nature” here does not mean, as the correctors evidently suppose it does,—one who serves nature, one who is a bond-man to nature; but one who is the lowest, the most servile, in the whole realm of nature. When one Irishman calls another ‘the thief o’ the wor-r-ld’ he does not mean to accuse the other of purloining this planet, but of being eminently

*the* thief of the world. So Queen *Margaret* calls *Gloster* eminently the slave of nature.

In a subsequent speech of the Queen's in this Scene, the change in Mr. Collier's folio of "bottled spider" to "*bottle* spider," seems a judicious correction of a probable typographical error.

### ACT III. SCENE 3.

"*Rat*. Make haste, the hour of death is expiate."

Steevens proposed *expire* for "expiate;" and it seems to me imperatively necessary to receive it into the text. There is no meaning to be extracted from the line in its present condition. Shakespeare is made to use 'expiate' in one other instance, which is quoted by Malone in defence of the continuance of the word in this passage.

"Then look I death my days should expiate."

*Sonnet XXII.*

But I believe that the same typographical error took place in the last, as in the first, on account of Shakespeare's use of this peculiar and quaint termination, of which he was fond:—he uses 'festinate,' 'combinat,' and 'conspirat.' It is remarkable that "expiate" has no possible meaning in either of these passages: and that *expirate* fully completes the sense of both.

### ACT IV. SCENE 4.

"*K. Rich*. Well! as you guess!"

If there be two words for the use of which, more than

any others, our English cousins twit us, they are 'well,' as an interrogative exclamation, and 'guess.' Milton uses both, as Shakespeare also frequently does, and exactly in the way in which they are used in America; and here we have them both in half a line. Like most of those words and phrases which it pleases John Bull to call Americanisms, they are English of the purest and best, which have lived here while they have died out in the mother country.



## KING HENRY VIII.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

*"Buck.* I am the shadow of poor Buckingham;  
Whose figure even this instant cloud puts on  
By darkening my clear sun."

This passage appears thus in all editions, although it is palpably nonsense, and that it is so has been confessed by all, and although the obvious typographical error has been pointed out by Johnson, Blackstone, and Monck Mason. Read,

"I am the shadow of poor Buckingham,  
Whose figure even this instant cloud puts *out*,  
By darkening my clear sun."

That is, 'even the form of whose shadow is obliterated by a cloud passing over the sun of my prosperity.'

### ACT II. SCENE 3.

*"Anne.* much better  
She had ne'er known pomp, though it be temporal;  
Yet if that quarrel fortune, do divorce  
It from the bearer," &c.

The change of "quarrel" to *cruel* in Mr. Collier's folio seems plainly to be required, and to be for the better.

### ACT III. SCENE 2.

"*Surrey*.                      Now all my joy  
Grace the conjunction."

Mr. Collier's folio reads, with reason, in my judgment,

"Now *may* all joy  
Grace the conjunction!"

My correspondent in Maine clings to the old reading, for these reasons :

"It is to be noticed that the exclamation of *Surrey* was called forth, not so especially by the marriage itself as by the circumstances attending it. He saw, in that marriage, which was opposed by *Cardinal Wolsey*, a means by which the *Cardinal* would lose his 'witchcraft over the *King*,' and by which, in consequence of the *King's* withdrawal from under that witchcraft, he himself might be revenged upon the *Cardinal*; hence his joyful expression,—'Now all *my* joy grace the conjunction,'—which was the expression written by Shakespeare, I have no doubt."

This is ingenious, and has some plausibility ; but is rather too subtle and recondite a meaning for the passage, which is plainly, I think, but a mere expression of good wishes. Mr. Singer and *Blackwood's Magazine* both approve of this emendation in the famous folio.

ACT IV. SCENE 2.

"*Pat.*                      How pale she looks,  
And of an earthly cold! Mark her eyes!"

The second line has hitherto been amended to read thus :

"And of an earthly cold! Mark *you* her eyes!"

But Mr. Collier's folio, in reading,

"And of an earthly *coldness*: Mark her eyes!"

deviates less both from the letter and the meaning of the original.

ACT. V. SCENE 2.

"*Chan.*                      But we all are men,  
In our natures frail; and capable  
Of our flesh; few are angels."

Many and diverse have been the projects for the correction of this passage. But what objection is there to reading thus ?

"But we all are men ;  
In our natures frail and *culpable*.  
Of our flesh, few are angels."

That is, 'according to the flesh, few of us are angels : ' 'frail and culpable, in our natures' needs no explanation.

—

"*K. Hen.* But know, I come not  
To hear such flattery now, and in my presence;  
They are too thin and base to hide offences."

Baseness has no share with thinness in hiding offences.  
Mr. Dyce is plainly right in suggesting,

"They are too thin and *bare* to hide offences."

---

"*K. Hen. [to Cranmer.]* Good man sit down. Now let me see  
the proudest,  
He that dares most, but wag his finger at thee:  
By all that's holy, he had better starve,  
Than once but think his place becomes thee not."

Why "his place?" The King puts *Cranmer* in the  
highest seat at the council table, which was *Cranmer's*  
own, and from which the others hoped to oust him. The  
error has been pointed out by Rowe and Mr. Dyce. Read,

"he had better starve  
Than once but think *this* place becomes thee not."

### SCENE 3.

The Porter's man says, in the original,

"Let me ne'er hope to see a Chine againe,  
And that I would not for a cow, God save her!"

For this Mr. Collier's MS. corrector proposes the following very ingenious and altogether unexceptionable correction, which must, without a doubt, be received into the text:

"Let me ne'er hope to see a *queen* again,  
And that I would not for a *crown*, God save her!"

## TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

“Tro. O that her hand,  
In whose comparison all whites are ink,  
Writing their own reproach; to whose soft seizure  
The cygnet's down is harsh, and spirit of sense  
Hard as the palm of ploughman.”

All the commentators have difficulty in explaining the last member of this sentence; and I do not wonder at it. Johnson's rendering of “spirit of sense” into ‘exquisite sensibility of touch,’ does not help the matter much. What do we gain by reading, “to whose soft seizure the cygnet's down is harsh, and *exquisite sensibility of touch* hard as the palm of ploughman?” We understand ‘exquisite sensibility of touch’; but the sentence as a whole is at least as obscure as it was before. There has evidently been a compositor's transposition; and we should read,

“to whose soft seizure  
And spirit of sense the cygnet's down is harsh,  
Hard as the palm of ploughman.”

This arrangement, with the explanation afforded by another passage in Act III. Scene 3, of this very play, makes the meaning of the present passage clear.

"nor doth the eye itself,  
(That most pure spirit of sense) behold itself;"  
*Act. III. Sc. 3.*

In other words, *Troilus* says of *Cressida's* hand, that 'to its soft clasp and exquisite sensibility, the cygnet's down is as harsh and hard as the hand of a ploughman.'

## SCENE 2.

"*Cres.* Achievement is command: ungain'd beseech."

Incomprehensible is the tampering of the editors with this very plain, thought not very accurately constructed line in the original. Mr. Collier's MS. folio makes it,

"*Achiev'd men still* command; ungain'd, beseech."

Mr. Collier himself would read,

"*Achiev'd men us* command; ungain'd, beseech,"

and Mr. Harness and Mr. Singer are with him.

But consider the context, and it is obvious that not only is no change needed, but that these proposed changes make *Cressida* say what she did not mean to say :

—"more in *Troilus* a thousand fold I see,  
Than in the glass of *Pandar's* praise may be;  
Yet I hold off. Women are angels, wooing;  
Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing:  
That she belov'd knows nought, that knows not this,—  
Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is:  
That she was never yet, that ever knew  
Love got so sweet, as when desire did sue.  
Therefore this maxim out of love I teach,—  
Achievement is command; ungain'd, beseech."



Who can read this and hesitate a moment as to the signification, which Steevens thus correctly, but, *me judice*, most superfluously, explained?—"Men after possession become our commanders; before it, they are our suppliants."

Upon this line Mr. Singer remarks, "The line being in italics, with inverted commas in the old copies, is evidently a quotation." Not "evidently;" and not at all. Mr. Dyce has conclusively shown, in his remarks upon a note of Mr. Knight's upon *Polonius'* advice to *Laertes* (*Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 3), that maxims, apophthegms, &c., i. e. the gnomic portions of dramas and poems, used to be printed in inverted commas. Mr. Dyce quotes instances from several plays and poems contemporaneous with Shakespeare, and to these numberless others might be added. I will point out but one, which is in Shakespeare's own works; and which is of such a nature, and occurs in such a situation, that it incontestably is the production of Shakespeare, and was written for the passage in which it appears. In *Measure for Measure*, Act II. Sc. 4, within two lines of the conclusion of her soliloquy after her ineffectual attempt to turn *Angelo* from his purpose against her brother's life and her honor, *Isabella* exclaims:

"Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:  
More than our brother is our chastity;"

the last line of which being a moral sentiment, the passage appears thus in the original:

Then *Isabel* live chaste, and brother, die  
"More then our Brother, is our chastitie."

Italic letters and quotation marks were used convertibly and sometimes together for this purpose; and the practice obtained even at a late day. To a misunderstanding of it,

is doubtless due the opinion that Sterne's beautiful thought, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," is a quotation. That apophthegm is printed in the first and few subsequent editions of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, in italic letters; but only to mark it, according to custom, as an apophthegm. *Cressida's* "Achievement is command," &c., is printed in italic letters and quotation marks, because, as she herself says, it is a "maxim."

## SCENE 3.

"*Nes.*                      Even so  
Doth valour's show, and valour's worth divide,  
In storms of fortune: For in her ray and brightness,  
The herd hath more annoyance by the brize,  
Than by the Tiger: but when the splitting wind  
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,  
And flies fled under shade. Why, then, the thing of courage,  
As rous'd with rage, with rage doth sympathize,  
And, with an accent tun'd in self-same key,  
Returns to chiding fortune."

The original gives the hemistich "*Retires* to chiding fortune,"—an obvious misprint. Pope suggested *returns*, which is the generally received reading. Hanmer's proposal, *replies*, which is also that of Mr. Collier's folio, seems much more consonant with the spirit of the passage. But Mr. Dyce, in his recently published *Few Notes &c.*, p. 107, asks: "did not Shakespeare write '*Retorts* to chiding fortune?'" Unquestionably, in my judgment. The conjecture seems to me to be one of the best among the many good, which have received the sanction of the taste, learning and discrimination of that gentleman. "Returns" is tame and meagre as applied to "to the thing of courage, roused with rage;" especially after the vigorous preceding lines. About four years ago it occurred to me that *retorts*



was the only word in the language, which would at once worthily fill the place and correct with probability the typographical error ; and it has been upon the margin of my Shakespeare since that time. Having Mr. Dyce's support I do not hesitate to say that it should be received into the text.

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I cannot allow another change proposed by Mr. Singer in this Scene to pass unchallenged, in spite of its speciousness and seeming unimportance. *Ulysses* says,

"And therefore is the glorious planet Sol  
In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd  
Amidst the other," &c.

Mr. Singer would read, "Amidst the *ether*," and says,—

" 'Amidst the *other*,' is surely not what the poet wrote. The classical reader will be reminded of a passage in the *Somnium Scipionis*:—'Medium fere regionem Sol obtinet, dux et princeps, et moderator luminum reliquiorum, mens mundi, et temperator,' &c. ; and of the lines of Lucretius on Epicurus, which have been applied to Shakespeare:—

'Qui genus humanum superavit et omneis  
Restinxit, stellas exortus uti ætherius Sol.'"  
*Text of Shakespeare Vindicated*, p. 192.

But, in spite of Mr. Singer and his quotations, the context shows that "amidst the other" is exactly what the poet did write. *Ulysses* is enforcing his opinion that Troy

"had been down  
And the great Hector's sword hath lack'd a master  
But for these instances.  
The *speciality of rule* hath been neglected," &c.

He goes on to show the necessity of subordination :

"The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,  
Observe degree, priority, and place  
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,  
Office, and custom, in all line of order :  
And *therefore* is the glorious planet Sol  
In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd  
Amidst the other; "

—the other planets, of course ; for, he continues,

" whose med'cinable eye  
Corrects the ill aspects of *planets* evil  
And posts like the commandment of a *king*,  
Sans check, to good and bad."

It is not Sol's place in the *ether*, but his supremacy "amidst the other" heavenly bodies, which *Ulysses* wishes to impress upon his hearers. The tenor of his entire speech shows this, beyond a question. Mr. Singer's quotations, too, are singularly unfortunate ; for the first shows Sol as "*dux et princeps*," and the second asserts that "*genus humanum superavit*." This may seem like wasting much labor on a trifle ; but I am anxious to show that nothing is to be gained by changing the original text when it is comprehensible.

The same remark will apply to Mr. Singer's proposal to read *pace* for "place" in the following lines from *Nestor's* approving comment on the third speech of *Ulysses* in this Scene :

" Ajax is grown self willed, and bears his head  
In such a rein, in full as proud a place  
As broad Achilles: "

—and again to his proposing,

"Severals and generals *are* of grace *extract*,"

"Severals and generals of grace exact,"

in that very speech. In both of these changes the only effect is to impoverish the expression, and make it tame and common. But, besides and beyond this, the text, as it stands in the original, affords a reasonable, consistent, and pertinent meaning ; and it therefore must not be disturbed even in favor of something better, granting that there is any one who can better it. Otherwise we may all of us go to work at improving Shakespeare's poetry wherever we think it well to do so :—and a very pretty piece of business we should make of it.

ACT III. SCENE 2.

*"Tro.*                       What will it be,  
When that the watery palate tastes indeed  
Love's thrice reputed nectar! death I fear me;  
Swooning destruction; or some joy too fine,  
Too subtle-potent, tun'd too sharp in sweetness,  
For the capacity of my ruder powers."

The reading of the quarto of 1609, which was transferred to Mr. Collier's folio,

"Love's thrice repured nectar,"

is doubtless the poet's word. "Thrice reputed nectar," has but a shadow of a very poor sense. It was the trebly

purified, the very nectareous essence of love, which was to be "too fine, too subtle potent" for the senses of *Troilus*.

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"*Pan.* Go to, a bargain made: seal it, seal it: I'll be the witness.—Here I hold your hand; here, my cousin'a. If ever you prove false one to another, since I have taken such pains to bring you together, let all pitiful goers-between be called to the world's end after my name, call them all—Pandars; let all constant men be Troiluses, all false women Cressidas, and all brokers-between Pandars! say, amen."

If *Troilus* and *Cressida* proved false "one to another" we can see why "all false women" should be called *Cressidas*; but why should "all constant men" be called *Troiluses*? *Pandarus* knew nothing of what was to be the issue of the love affair; he but supposed a case of mutual falsehood. Evidently, "constant" should be *inconstant*.

### ACT III. SCENE 3.

"*Ach.* For speculation turns not to itself  
Till it hath travail'd, and is married there  
Where it may see itself."

"Married" is palpably a misprint for *mirrored*: a discovery which we owe to Mr. Collier's folio. The author of the articles on that volume in *Blackwood's Magazine*, thinks that 'mirror' was not used as a verb in Shakespeare's time, and finds that 'to mirror' does not occur even in Johnson's Dictionary. But this is no ground for deciding that such a bold writer as Shakespeare did not use it; while it is the best reason for believing that a compositor who had never seen the word 'mirrored' should suppose it to be 'married.'

## ACT IV. SCENE 4.

"Tro. The Grecian youths are full of qualitie,  
Their loving well compos'd with gifts of nature  
Flowing and swelling ore with Arts and exercise."

Thus corruptly this passage stands in the original folio.  
It is usually printed thus :

"The Grecian youths are full of quality.  
They're loving, well composed, with gifts of nature *flowing*,  
And swelling o'er with arts and exercise."

But I suggest the following reading, as having the merits  
of a greater conformity to Shakespeare's style and a less  
deviation from the original text.

"The Grecian youths are full of quality.  
They're loving, well compos'd with gifts of nature,  
Flowing and swelling o'er with arts and exercise."<sup>11</sup>

## CORIOLANUS.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

*Men.* I shall tell you  
A pretty tale; it may be you have heard it;  
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture  
To scale it a little more."

Some of the editors interpret "scale," 'to disperse;' but granting the word that meaning, what sense does it afford in the place it holds? *Menenius* tells the people that it may be that they have heard his story; *but*, since it serves his purpose, he will venture to use it, old as it is. Can there be the least doubt that Theobald was right in changing one letter, and reading,

"I will venture  
To *scale* it a little more."

### SCENE 6.

*Com.* The Roman gods,  
Lead their successes as we wish our own;  
That both our powers, with smiling fronts encountering,  
May give you thankful sacrifice!"



This invocative prayer to the gods is nonsense as it now stands ; but the very obvious correction proposed by Warburton and supported by Mr. Dyce, removes all difficulty. Read,

“ Ye Roman gods,  
Lead their successes,” &c.

### ACT II. SCENE 1.

“*Men.* I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tyber in’t; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint.”

Mr. Collier’s folio suggests, with reason, that we should read “*without* a drop of allaying Tiber,” and, “the *thirst* complaint.” Common sense will not set the latter word aside because Mr. Singer has discovered that “‘*thirst*’ was *sometimes* provincially pronounced and spelt *first* and *furst*.” Shakespeare does not make *Menenius* talk like a West of England ploughboy. In the same Scene, the suggestion of *empiric physic*, for “*empiricktutique*” of the original, in the speech of *Menenius*, is one which will be gladly received from the folio. “Teach” of the old copy is also, without a doubt, misprinted for *touch*, in the following passage :

“*Sic.* This, as you say, suggested  
At some time when his soaring insolence  
Shall *touch* the people,” &c.

### SCENE 3.

In the generally received text, *Coriolanus*, as he stands in the Forum to ask the voices of the citizens for the consulship, disgusted with the task, exclaims :

"Why in this wolfish toge should I stand here!" &c.

"Togue" is "tongue" in the original; but that is evidently a misprint. "Wolfish" has given much trouble to the commentators. Mr. Collier's folio suggests *woolless* as a substitute; and the conjecture has some plausibility, because in the previous Scene *Coriolanus* is spoken of as refusing to put on "the napless vesture of humility." To this reading however, which is received on the ground that *Coriolanus* was like a wolf *in sheep's clothing*, and not like a sheep in wolf's clothing, the Hon. George Lunt thus objects:

"It is true, that the wolf covered himself with a sheep-skin; and if this covering had really converted him into a sheep, Mr. Collier might have the benefit of his interpretation. But although I shall not argue with Mr. Collier that sheep skin is not naturally *sheep's clothing*, yet I do hold that, as when a man wears a borrowed garment, it is taken to be and is called *his* garment, so, though the sheep skin was naturally sheep's clothing, yet, by the appropriation, it was *pro hac vice*, more appropriately *wolf's clothing*, and, therefore, a

——'woolvish toge,'

and, therefore, Shakespeare so wrote it."

But where is the propriety, especially the poetic propriety, of calling the sheep skin "wolf's clothing," merely because the wolf wore it? The moment it became wolf's clothing, that moment it ceased to be a disguise, and lost all significance; and, besides, 'wolfish' means not 'belonging to a wolf,' but 'like a wolf.' But here is an objection by the same gentleman, not so easily answered.

"When it is considered that the gowns of the Romans were,



in fact, fabricated of wool,—to say that a wollen gown is *woolless*, because it is insidiously alleged to have been napless, or for any other reason why—involves a gratuitous absurdity, of which I, for one, do not believe Shakespeare to have been capable.”

Unquestionably, Shakespeare would never have called a woollen toga “woolless ;” and the new reading cannot be accepted.

But since neither “wolfish” nor *woolless* give a consistent meaning, let us look at the original line, the context, and the other passages of the play, which have a bearing upon this one. The word in the corrupted text seems to have misled all the commentators upon the passage. They evidently regard *Coriolanus* when standing for the consulship, as feeling, what our border-men call, ‘wolfish about the head and shoulders.’ But the text affords no support for this opinion. *Coriolanus* feels contempt for the people: he derides the custom, and thinks that it belittles him to conform to it. What *Brutus* says of him shows no ireful feeling on his part, but merely that he thought the ceremony very small business.

“I heard him swear,  
Were he to stand for consul, never would he  
Appear i’ the market-place, or on him put  
The napless vesture of humility;  
Nor, showing (as the manner is) his wounds  
To the people, beg their stinking breaths.”

*Act II. Sc. 1.*

*Coriolanus* himself says, on a previous occasion,

“I’d rather have one scratch my head in the sun,  
When the alarum were struck, than idly sit  
To hear my nothings monster’d.”

*Act II. Sc. 2.*

It makes him shame-faced to go through this foolery.



inadmissible on other grounds ; *woolless* is equally so, because the toga which *Coriolanus* wore was made of wool. Is it not plain then, that, merely continuing his ridicule, he said,

“Why in this *foolish* togue should I stand here!”

Yes, unquestionably, for in this very speech, after only five lines which impeach the binding force of custom, he says,

“Rather than *fool* it so  
Let the high office and the honor go.”

The word in the original is “wooluish ;” and that it is a typographical error for *foolish*, is confirmed by the fact that, in not one of the fifty instances in which Shakespeare uses ‘wolf,’ ‘wolvish,’ or ‘wolves,’ does he spell those words, or are they spelled, with two *o*’s. ‘Wolfish’ and ‘woolless,’ being both entirely inadmissible, can there be any question that we should read ?—

“Why in this foolish togue should I stand here  
To beg of Hob and Dick that do appear,  
Their needless vouches!     \*     \*     \*  
\*     \*     \*     Rather than fool it so  
Let the high office and the honor go.”

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

In the speech by *Coriolanus*, beginning, “O good, but most unwise Patricians,” there are five attempts at emendation in Mr. Collier’s folio. With one exception, all are unnecessary, and therefore inadmissible. That which may be accepted is, “*revoke* your dangerous lenity,” for “awake

your dangerous lenity." In the same Scene, "How shall this bosom multiplied digest," &c., is changed to "How shall this *bisson multitude*," &c. ; an emendation justified by the context and the language of Shakespeare's day. "Bisson" is 'blind ;' and the word has not entirely passed out of use in this country.

ACT IV. SCENE 3.

"*Vol.* You had more beard when I last saw you, but your favor is well appeared by your tongue."

Read with Steevens,

**"your favor is well *approved* by your tongue."**

SCENE 5.

"*Auf.*                                 and pouring war  
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,  
Like a bold flood o'er beat."

Correct a typographical error which Jackson pointed out, and read,

“and pouring war  
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,  
Like a bold flood, o’er *bear’t*.”

**SCENE 6.**

"*Bru.* Rais'd only that the weaker sort may wish  
Good Marcius home again."

The Tribune *Brutus* would not speak of *Coriolanus* as "good Marcius;" but he would very naturally call him, in derision, "god Marcius," which is the reading of Mr. Collier's folio.

## ACT IV. SCENE 7.

"Auf. So our virtues  
Lie in the interpretation of the time;  
And power, unto itself most commendable,  
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair  
To extol what it hath done."

This, the generally received reading, and that of the folio, is utterly incomprehensible; but the errors which make it so are those of a compositor who sets his 'matter' by ear, as many of them do. 'Chair' and 'cheer' were formerly pronounced alike; and I have even heard some old people call a chair, a *cheer*. To this fact we owe the misprint of *Macbeth's* speech in the third Scene of the fifth Act of the tragedy:

"This push  
Will chair [cheers in the original] me ever, or disseat me now."

Mr. Collier's folio very properly changes "chair" to *cheer*, in the passage which we are now considering. But Mr. Singer then asks the very pertinent and unanswerable question, "what meaning can be attached to 'a tomb so evident as a *cheer*'?" and himself proposes 'a tomb so evident as a *hair*,' which he must pardon me for thinking deplorably tame and prosaic, even if it have any meaning at all. It is plain to me that *Aufidius*, after saying that "our virtues lie in the *interpretation of the time*," (that is, in the time's appreciation of us, not in our appreciation

of the time, as the writer in *Blackwood*, Sept. 1853, seems to think,) adds, that the most elaborate eulogy upon a great man's tomb is a testimony to his power, not so eloquent as a cheer to him in his lifetime. Few who write for the press can be fortunate enough not to know many composers who would find no difficulty in setting up 'evident' for 'eloquent.' Long since, it seemed plain to me that we should read,

"So our virtues  
Lie in th' interpretation of the time,  
And power, unto itself most commendable  
Hath not a tomb so *eloquent* as a *cheer*  
To extol what it hath done."

#### ACT V. SCENE 2.

"1 *Guard*. Then you should hate Rome as he does. Can you, when you have pushed out of your gates the very defender of them, and, in a violent popular ignorance, given your enemy your shield, think to front his revenges with the easy groans of your old women, the virginal palms of your daughters, or with the palsied intercession of such a decayed dotant as you seem to be!"

Can any thing be more deplorable than Mr. Singer's proposal to read "*virginal qualms*" for "*virginal palms*" in this passage? But Warburton had been at the trouble to suggest "*Virginal pasmes*!" Mr. Singer adds however that "*Virginal palms*" may mean the palms or hands of the maidens joined in supplication." Indeed, Mr. Singer! may it? Is it possible? Can such an obvious and simple construction of a plain but beautiful passage be dreamt of in your philosophy? I must ask pardon for noticing such attempts upon Shakespeare's text, and for noticing them as I do; for, in truth, I should as soon expect an intelligent reader, not to say a competent editor of Shakespeare,

\* \* \* \* \* "to expostulate,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 "Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,"

as thus to raise a question on what it would seem impossible to misunderstand.

## SCENE 4.

*Auf.*                               served his designments  
 In mine own person; help to reap the fame  
 Which he did end all his."

Mr. Collier's folio suggests *ear* (plough) for "end." This Mr. Singer finds to be "a good emendation of a probable misprint," but adds, with reason, that if "ear be accepted, 'reap' and 'ear' must change places thus,

'help to *ear* the fame  
 Which he did *reap* all his."

"or," as Mr. Singer well continues, "*Aufidius* is made to say that he had a share in the harvest, while *Coriolanus* had all the labor of ploughing," which is just what he does not mean to say. The *Blackwood* critic thinks with Mr. Singer. But there is not the least necessity for this violence to the original text. *Aufidius* helped to reap the fame which *Coriolanus* made, in the end, all his.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS.**

ACT I. SCENE 2.

"*Mar.* My lord,—to step out of these dreary dumps—  
How comes it," &c.

The first folio has "*sudden dumps*" which is evidently an error for "*sullen dumps*," as Mr. Dyce suggests.

ACT II. SCENE 3.

“*Tam.*                      and the hounds  
Should drive upon thy new transformed limbs.”

It is more than probable that "drive" is a misprint for *dine*, as Mr. Collier's folio suggests.

“*Lav.* When did the tiger's young ones teach the dam !  
O, do not learn her wrath: she taught it thee:  
The milk, thou suck'dst from her, did turn to marble ;  
Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny.—  
Yet every mother breeds not sons alike ;  
Do thou entreat her show a woman pity.

[*To Chiron.*

"*Chi.* What! would'st thou have me prove myself a bastard!





*Lavinia* says nothing about *Chiron's* father; but his reply would justify the belief that *Tamora* had played false with a true Milesian. How was he to prove himself "a bastard," by being unlike *his mother*? Can any one believe that Shakespeare could have been guilty of such a bull as this? However, there are but few passages in this horrid play which were touched by his pen.

## ROMEO AND JULIET.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Romeo.*                      She hath *Dian's* wit,  
And in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,  
From love's weak childish bow she lives uncharm'd."

The last word is evidently corrupted. Rowe changed it to *unharm'd*, which is the received text, and which gives the sense of the passage ; but Mr. Collier's folio provides for us another word, "*encharm'd*," which is much nearer the original text, and much better in every way. It will hereafter take a place in the text without a question.

### SCENE 5.

I have never seen a *Juliet* upon the stage who appeared to appreciate the archness of the dialogue with *Romeo* in this Scene. They go through it solemnly, or, at best, with staid propriety. They reply literally to all *Romeo's* speeches about saints and palmers. But it should be noticed that though this is the first interview of the lovers, we do not hear them speak until the close of their dialogue, in which they have arrived at a pretty thorough understanding of their mutual feeling. *Juliet* makes a feint



of parrying *Romeo's* advances; but does it archly, and knows that he is to have the kiss he sues for. He asks,

"Have not saints lips, and holy palmers, too?"

The stage *Juliet* answers with literal solemnity. But it was not a conventicle at old *Capulet's*. *Juliet* was not holding forth. How demure is her real answer:

"Ay pilgrim, lips that they must use—in prayer."

And when *Romeo* fairly gets her into the corner, towards which she has been contriving to be driven, and he says,

"Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purg'd,"

and does put them to that purgation, how slyly the pretty puss gives him the opportunity to repeat the penance, by replying,

"Then have my lips the sin that they have took."

ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Merc.* Young Abraham Cupid, he that shot so trim."

Upton gave us the *Adam*, which takes the place of "Abraham" in all the current editions, except Mr. Knight's. But, as Mr. Dyce says, there is not the slightest authority for the change. The last named gentleman conjectures that "Abraham" in this line is a corruption of Auburn, as it unquestionably is in the following passages, which he quotes:

"When is the eldest sonne of Bryam,  
That abraham coloured Troian f dead"

*Soliman & Perseda*, 1599, Sig. H3.

"A goodlie, long thicke, Abram coloured beard."

Middleton's *Blurt, Master Constable*, 1602, Sig. D.

and in *Coriolanus*, Act II. Scene 3,

"not that our heads are some browne, some blacke, som Abram,"

as we read in the first three folios.

The suggestion is more than plausible ; and we at least owe to Mr. Dyce the efficient protection which it must give to the original text. Cupid is always represented by the old painters as auburn-haired.

## SCENE 2.

"*Rom.* When he bestrides the lazie puffing Cloudes  
And sailes vpon the bosome of the ayre."

This is the text as it stands in the original. "Lazie puffing" is evidently a misprint. It was changed to "lazy *pacing*" by Pope, which has been the received reading since his time. But, however much we may have become attached to it, it must be abandoned for "lazy *passing*," which is supplied by the margins of Mr. Collier's folio ; and which (*passing* having been written with two long *s*'s), is evidently the word which the compositor mistook.

## ACT III. SCENE 2.

"*Jul.* Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
That runaway's eyes may wink, and Romeo  
Leap to these arms, untalked of and unseen."

Of the incomprehensible "runaways" in the second line, many explanations and many emendations have been offered. Warburton thought that the runaway was the sun : Steevens thought that *Juliet* meant to call the night a runaway : Douce insists that she applies that term to herself, as a runaway from her duty to her parents. But no explanation will obviate the difficulty. The word in the original is "*runawayes*," and involves, unquestionably, an error of the press, and a gross one. The conjectural emendations have been both diverse and numerous. Monck Mason proposed *Renomy's*, that is *Renomé's*; Zachary Jackson, *un-awares*, which was adopted by Mr. Collier and Mr. Knight, in spite of the feeble sense it gives. All the conjectures have been unsatisfactory, rather on account of the sense which they give, than the improbability of the mistake which they involve. The most plausible suggestion yet made, seems to me to be, "*rude day's*," by Mr. Dyce, in his *Remarks on Mr. Collier's and Mr. C. Knight's Editions of Shakespeare*. It is only plausible however, and evidently has not the conjecturer's own approbation. \*

The error will probably remain for ever uncorrected, unless a word which I venture to suggest seems to others as unexceptionable as it does to me. *Juliet* desires that somebody's eyes may wink, so that *Romeo* may leap to her arms "*untalked of*," as well as "unseen." She wishes to

\* In his last publication, *A few Notes on Shakespeare*, he offers "*roving eyes*." But it is surely much better to read—

Spread thy close curtain, love-performing hight,  
That *rude day's* eyes may wink,

than,

That *roving* eyes may wink.

Neither of these, however, is more satisfactory to me than it appears to be to Mr. Dyce himself.

avoid the scandal, the bruit, which would ensue upon the discovery of her new-made husband's secret visit.

I think, therefore, and also because the misprint is by no means improbable (as I know from experience) that Shakespeare wrote "*rumoures* eyes," and that we should read,

"Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
That Rumour's eyes may wink, and Romeo  
Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen."

This occurred to me in consequence of an endeavor to conjecture what would satisfy the exigencies of the last as well as of the second line of these three; and perhaps I yield quite as much to the immediate impression which the word made upon me, and which all other conjectures, whether of others or myself, had failed in the least to do, as to the reasons which have confirmed my first opinion.

The absence of a long letter in *rumoures*, to correspond with the *y* in "runawayes," does not trouble me. I have repeatedly found in my proofs words containing long letters when the word which I wrote contained none, and *vice versa*; and yet my manuscript is welcomed by the compositor on account of its legibility. It should be noticed, too, that neither Jackson's *unawares* (accepted by Mr. Collier and Mr. Knight), nor Mr. Collier's folio corrector's *enemies* contains a long letter. Those who understand the economy of the composing case will see that a long letter is not necessary in the word to be substituted here, because most of the errors in type setting are on account of previous mistakes in the distribution of the type: the letters having been placed in the wrong boxes. 'Rumor' was spelt *rumoure*, in Shakespeare's day, and the possessive case, *rumoures*, of course.

As to Rumor's eyes, they are as necessary to her office

as are her ears or her tongues. Virgil's *Fama* is but Rumor, and of her he says,

"Cui quot sunt corpore plumæ  
Tot vigiles oculi subter, mirabile dictu,  
Tot linguæ, totidem ora sonant, tot subrigit aures."  
*Æneid*, Lib. IV. 181.

And in Shakespeare's day Rumor was represented with eyes as well as tongues ; as we know by the following description of that character as she was represented in a Masque—by Decker, and which was evidently founded on Virgil's impersonation :

"Directly under her in a cart by herselfe, Fame stood upright : a woman in a watchet roabe, thickly set with *open eyes* and tongues, a payre of large golden winges at her backe, a trumpet in her hand, a mantle of sundry cullours traversing her body : all these ensigns displaying but the propertie of her swiftnesse and aptnesse to disperse *Rumoure*."

*The whole magnificent Entertainment given  
to King James and the queen his Wife,  
&c., 15th March, 1603. By Thomas Decker,  
4to. 1604.*

Shakespeare, however, needed no precedent or hint to give eyes to Rumor, whom he himself had brought personally before his audience, in the Induction to the *Second Part of Henry IV.* where she is "painted full of tongues." These quotations merely show that the idea was sufficiently familiar to his auditors, unlearned and learned, for him to use it in this manner.

But these considerations are not urged to gain acceptance for the reading which I propose ; their office is but to meet possible objections to it. If it do not commend itself at once to the intelligent readers of Shakespeare, with

a favor which increases upon reflection, no argument can, or should, fasten it upon the text.

[The foregoing suggestions and remarks (except the allusion to *enemies*) had been a part of my Shakesperian notes for some time, seen and approved of by a few fellow-students of the great Poet, but uncertain in what shape they would see the light, when renewed attention was directed to the condition of his text by the publication of the MS. changes in Mr. Collier's folio of 1632. That volume furnishes "*enemies' eyes*," a reading which is perhaps the worst which has been offered, and which I did not feel called upon even to condemn in the two papers upon the text of Shakespeare which I prepared for *Putnam's Magazine*, in the summer of 1853. A casual remark, however, in one of them, brought me from all quarters of the country correspondence containing conjectural emendations of this passage.

One, from St. Louis, suggested "*noonday's eyes*," which is not without some plausibility; and it resembles somewhat one of the readings proposed by the Rev. Mr. Dyce. But even if there were no objection, as to time, against the word 'noonday,' there is a literalness and particularity about it which are poetically out of place in the passage for which it is proposed. *Juliet* is using large and general terms: she calls the West "*Phœbus' mansion*," and her thoughts spring directly from day to "*cloudy night*." She is affected only by the ideas of light and obscurity; she does not consider hours or parts of the day or night. To her there is but one grand division of time; and to make her specify noontime, in attributing eyes to day, is to introduce a particularity into her speech incongruous with her tone of thought. But supposing such particularity not objectionable on the higher grounds of criticism, the time specified in the term is inconsistent with the requirements of the Scene; and therefore Shakespeare would have been



particular, only to be particularly wrong. This is evident from the fact, which a short examination will bring to light, that *Juliet* was not married until after noonday ; and that some hours elapsed between her marriage and the time of this soliloquy.

*Juliet* in the fifth Scene of the second Act, in her impatience to hear from her lover, says,—

“The clock struck nine, when I did send the nurse ;  
In half an hour she promised to return.  
Perchance she cannot meet him,” &c.

so that it was well on towards ten o'clock before she received *Romeo's* message. But what was that message ? We find it in the fourth Scene of this same Act :

“Bid her devise some means to come to shrift  
*This afternoon :*  
And there she shall, at Friar Laurence' cell,  
Be shriv'd and married.”

It was then some time past noonday before *Juliet* went to the Friar's cell. But she herself gives the *coup de grace* to this supposition ; for in the very scene of her soliloquy, having been betrayed into upbraiding *Romeo*, by hearing from the *Nurse* that he has killed *Tybalt*, she remorsefully exclaims,—

“Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name  
When I, thy *three hours' wife*, have mangled it !”

It is plain that her soliloquy is spoken toward evening.

But what need of this comparison of hours and minutes ? Is not the soliloquy itself steeped in the passion-breathing languor of a summer's afternoon just melting into twilight ? Is it not plain that *Juliet* has been watching the sun sink

slowly down to the horizon, and gazing pensively into the golden air, until her own imaginings have taken on its glowing hue, and that then she breaks out into her longing prayer for night and *Romeo*? Facts and figures tell us that her soliloquy is spoken just before sunset; but what reader of the whole soliloquy will not set aside the evidence of facts and figures as superfluous—almost impertinent?

It is not because the conjectures of my other correspondents are less plausible than the foregoing that I do not notice them here; but because that one suggested reflections upon *Juliet's* position and feelings, which the others do not. The remaining suggestions, however, as well as all others, except *Rumor's*, fail to meet the demands of the context, “*untalked of and unseen.*” One of my fellow-students, however, Mr. Hoppin, of Providence, R. I., proposed the same word which had occurred to me, sustained it also by the well known passage in Virgil, and expressed his surprise that he had not been able to discover that it had been made before. But both he and I had been forestalled in making the correction, as I found by the letter of a correspondent in South Carolina, in which a letter from Mr. Singer, which I had never seen or heard of, was quoted from *Notes and Queries*. The suggestion in the following extract from Mr. Singer's letter is interesting, and demands attention:

“In the course of his note he [Monck Mason] mentions that Heath, the author of the *Revisal*, reads ‘*Rumour's* eyes may wink;’ which agrees in sense with the rest of the passage, but differs widely from ‘runaway's’ in the trace of the letters.

“I was not conscious of having seen this suggestion of Heath's, when, in consequence of a question put to me by a gentleman of distinguished taste and learning, I turned my thoughts to the passage, and at length came to the conclusion that the word must have been *rumourers*, and that from its unfrequent occurrence the only other example of it at present known to me being one

afforded by the poet), the printer mistook it for *runaways*; which, when written indistinctly, it may have strongly resembled. I therefore think that we may read with some confidence :

‘Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
That *rumourers*’ eyes may wink, and Romeo  
Leap to these arms, *untalk’d* of and *unseen*.’

It fulfils the requirements of both metre and sense, and the words *untalk’d of* and *unseen* make it nearly indisputable. I had at first thought it might be ‘*rumourous* eyes;’ but the personification would then be wanting. Shakspeare has personified Rumour in the Introduction to the Second Part of *King Henry IV.*; and in *Coriolanus*, Act IV. Sc. 6, we have,

‘Go see this *rumourer* whipp’d.’”

Until after reading this letter I was not only, like Mr. Singer, unconscious of having seen Mr. Heath’s suggestion, but had never read his notes upon this play. On referring to the volume, however (*A Revisal of Shakspeare’s Text*, &c., 8vo. London, 1765), I find, p. 511, that Mr. Heath merely says—

“I think it is not improbable that the Poet wrote,

*That Rumour’s eyes may wink ;*

which agrees perfectly well with what follows.”

He gives no reason for his supposition, and offers no support for it. Here, then, we have three coincident conjectures from three persons, each ignorant of the other’s suggestion ; which, if the word which they propose to substitute be acceptable in itself, adds greatly to the probability that it restores the true reading. Mr. Singer’s independent

conjecture that *rumourer's* is the word, also affords collateral support to the former, the idea being the same in both. But it should be remarked that the line does not need a word of three syllables :

That Ru | mour's eyes | may wink, | and Ro | me-o.

The typographical error which gave us *runaways*, and which Mr. Singer would correct, by substituting *rumourers*, almost certainly loaded the line with a redundant syllable. Notice also, that the addition of an *r* diminishes the chances for an error by the compositor. It would be far more likely that "rumoures" should be mistaken for "runawayes" than that "rumourers" should cause the same error. Yet another objection against "rumourers" is, that its particularity is inconsistent with the poetical character of the passage, in which, as I before remarked, *Juliet* uses only large and general terms. She would hardly descend from the generic personification of Rumor to the particularity of a rumor, or, what is worse, several rumorers; though, of course, Rumor is but the embodiment of an abstraction of rumorers.

Mr. Collier claims, with reason, that the occurrence of the same conjectural emendation to two readers of Shakespeare, without consultation, is cumulative evidence in its favor; and here, in effect, is such a coincident conjecture on the part of four. But, whatever may be the decision between Mr. Singer on the one hand, and Mr. Heath, Mr. Hoppin and myself on the other, I think it is quite evident that the word demanded by the context is either *Rumour's* or *rumourers*; and I am quite willing to forego my claim for the discovery in favor of Mr. Benjamin Heath, to whom the credit of first 'guessing' at the idea belongs; and I have no doubt that my Providence correspondent is like-

minded with me. Let those dispute or sneer about priority of conjecture whose minds and natures fit them to snarl over trifles,—the scraps and crumbs of literary reputation : the object of all who have the true enthusiasm of Shakesperian students, is not personal credit, but the integrity of Shakespeare's text.

I had altogether passed by the theory advocated by the Rev. Mr. Halpin in the Shakespeare Society's Papers, Vol. II, —that "runaways" is the word which Shakespeare wrote,—as carrying its refutation on its face ; but, as it has recently found some favor with a few whose judgments are entitled to respect, it is but proper that its claims to consideration should be examined. Mr. Halpin's argument occupies nineteen octavo pages ; but his positions and conclusions are briefly these.

The character of the soliloquy is purely hymeneal ; and hymeneal poetry has a diction, an imagery, and a structure peculiar to itself, to which the soliloquy conforms, and which is especially observable, as regards structure, in the repetition of *Juliet's* prayer for the coming of Night : Cupid was a very important personage in hymeneal poetry and in hymeneal masks : hymeneal masks were common in Shakespeare's day : Cupid is called a runaway by Moschus, and, which is of more importance, by Ben Jonson, in his *Hue and Cry after Cupid* : the andirons in *Imogen's* bed-chamber, when she was a clandestinely married bride (*Cymbeline*, Act II. Sc. 4), were "two winking Cupids : " Night and Cupid are the only assistants at the spousal, as related in the old poem of *Romeus and Juliet*, upon which Shakespeare founded his tragedy ;—therefore Shakespeare wrote,

"That runaway's eyes may wink," &c.

"That Cupid's eyes may wink."

This argument is very learned and very ingenious ; but far more learning and ingenuity have been displayed in the support of theories, which, though more plausible, were equally unsound. To examine it properly we should have the entire soliloquy before us, and as it appears in the original folio :

“Gallop apace, you fiery footed steedes,  
Towards *Phoebus* lodging, such a Wagoner  
As *Phaeton* would whip you to the west,  
And bring in Cloudie night immediately,  
Spred thy close Curtain Loue-performing night,  
That run-awayes eyes may wincke, and *Romeo*  
Leape to these armes, vntalkt of and vnseene,  
Louers can see to doe their Amorous rights  
And by their owne Beauties : or if Loue be blind,  
It best agrees with night: come ciuill night,  
Thou sober suted Matron all in blacke,  
And learne me how to loose a winning match,  
Plaid for a paire of stainesse Maidenhoods  
Hood my vnman'd blood bayting in my Cheekes,  
With thy Blacke mantle, till strange Loue grow bold,  
Thinke true Loue acted simple modestie :  
Come night, come *Romeo*, come thou day in night,  
For thou will lie vpon the wings of night  
Whiter then new Snow upon a Rauens backe :  
Come gentle night, come louing blackebrow'd night.  
Giue me my *Romeo*, and when I shall die,  
Take him and cut him out in little starres,  
And he will make the Face of Heauen so fine,  
That all the world will be in Loue with night,  
And pay no worship to the Garish Sun.  
O I haue bought the mansion of a Loue,  
But not possest it, and though I am sold,  
Not yet enjoy'd, so tedious is this day,  
As is the night before some Festiuall,  
To an impatient child that hath new robes  
And may not weare them.” &c.

Is there any thing here more than an expression of the feelings of a newly married girl “many fathom deep in

love ? ” Is there not an utter absence of all formality and restraint in the construction of the soliloquy ? and is not the same freedom shown in the diction ? It would be difficult to point out in poetry a passage which has less the air of being constructed with regard to a formula. Indeed, the poet seems to have been under no restraint but that of versification ; and not to have felt that. *Juliet* expresses her longing for the coming of night several times ; but that is evidently only because she wants night to come. The approach of the time which will bring *Romeo* to her absorbs her whole mind. There is no “intercalary principle,” or any other principle evident in the soliloquy. Even Mr. Halpin can only find that “four several invocations to Night, *more or less* varied, occur at intervals *more or less* regular.” But the variation is decidedly more, and the regularity decidedly less. With the same license, almost any soliloquy might be said to be constructed on an intercalary principle. This assumption of the hymeneal character of the soliloquy, which is the very key-stone of Mr. Halpin’s argument, is plainly but assumption ; and, of course, the importance of Cupid in the hymeneal masks, and the frequency of those masks in Shakespeare’s day, are of no farther consequence.

As to Cupid being called a runaway by Moschus,—what did Shakespeare know about that ? It is not necessary to be of the Farmer school as to the no learning of Shakespeare, to decide at once that the supposition that he had read the ode of Moschus in the original, is entirely unwarranted ; and in his day there was no translation of it. But even if he had found Cupid called a runaway by some Greek and Latin authors, would he upon that warrant have called him ‘runaway,’ absolutely and without mitigation, not even calling him ‘*a* runaway,’ and having made no previous allusion to him ? and this, too, to a mixed au-

dience, not one in fifty of whom had the tongues? Such was not his way of writing for the audiences of the Blackfriars and the Globe.

The fact that Ben Jonson in his *Hue and Cry after Cupid*, calls Cupid "Venus' Runaway," is nothing to the purpose; because, when the Mask opens, Cupid *has run away* from Venus, and it would be almost impossible to avoid speaking of him as Venus' runaway. He is never spoken of simply as a runaway; much less is he called absolutely 'runaway,' even by Jonson. He is "Venus' runaway," just as Pompey, who runs away from Mr. Randolph of South Carolina, is Mr. Randolph's runaway. But even were this not so, the occurrence of the epithet in Jonson's Mask does not help Mr. Halpin, because that was not written until 1608; whereas, *Romeo and Juliet* was written as early as 1596, and this soliloquy was printed in the quarto of 1599.\* Mr. Halpin's eagerness in the defence of his theory probably blinded him to these conclusive facts.

That the andirons in *Imogen's* bed-chamber could have any acknowledged hymeneal significance, the very fact of her marriage, and the great dread which she had of exposure, forbids us to believe. If winking Cupids had a hymeneal symbolism so universally recognized, that it was only necessary for Shakespeare to write "that runaway's eyes may wink," in order to have a promiscuous audience know that *Juliet* was thinking of a winking Cupid as a part of a hymeneal pageant, *Imogen* would surely have kept them out of her chamber at all hazards.

Mr. Halpin's remark, that in the poem of *Romeus and*

\* Ben Jonson did not call his Mask *The Hue and Cry after Cupid*: that title was given to it by Gifford so lately as 1816. In the folio of 1616 it is called:—The Description of the Masque with the Nuptiall Songs at the Lord Vicount Haddington's marriage at Court. On the Shroue-tuesday night, 1608.



*Juliet* "Night and Cupid are the only assistants at the spousal," does not represent the passage in its true light. It is merely narrative ; the allusions to Night and Cupid are incidental and obvious, and are made, not at the time when hymeneal allusions were appropriate, but when *Romeo* and *Juliet* part at the Friar's cell.

"These said, they kisse, and then part to theyr father's house,  
The joyfull bryde vnto her home, to his eke goth the spouse ;  
Contented both, and yet both discontented still,  
Till Night and Venus child geve leave the wedding to fulfill."

How the perception of a clever and a learned man may be perverted, is shown by the reference which Mr. Halpin makes to *Juliet's* supposition,

"Or if love be *blind*," &c.

which he thinks, "implies that she had already considered 'Love' in the correlative condition, and regarded him as *able to see*." But *Juliet* does not make reference here to the god of Love, but to a pair of lovers. Thus she says,

"*Lovers can see* to do their amorous rites  
By their own beauties ; or if love be *blind*," &c.

The fact that 'love' is spelled with a capital letter in no way confirms Mr. Halpin's supposition ; because the word is so spelled in every instance in which it occurs in the soliloquy, as may be seen by reference to the passage as it is quoted above from the original folio. Thus "Love-performing," "strange Love grown bold," "true Love acted," "in Love with night," "the mansion of a Love" Evidently no one of these 'Loves' has any more reference to Cupid than the other ; and this is still further shown, as far as the old typography can show it, by the fact that in the older

quarto the word is not spelled in this soliloquy with a capital letter in a single instance.

To leave no part of Mr. Halpin's argument unanswered, —his supposition that the numberless works of ancient art in which Cupid is represented as captured, imprisoned, caged, fettered and with his wings bound, are to be referred to "his notorious propensity to *running away* from his mother," is innocent indeed. He should have consulted female Counsel before venturing on such a plea. Women in classic days were, at heart, much like women of now-a-days; and, then, as now, they would see Love bound, not for his mother's sake, but their own.

There is, it seems to me, not the least shadow of a reason for believing that Shakespeare would without having so much as made an allusion to Cupid, speak of him absolutely as 'runaway,' even supposing that he had any reason to expect that his audience would understand the epithet. This, we have seen, was not the case; and also, that he would not have understood it himself.

But besides all this, there is one other consideration which is in itself conclusive upon this point.

Let it be remarked, that the eyes in question were to close as the natural consequence of a previous act. *Juliet* says "spread thy close curtain *love-performing* Night," in order that—what? That *Love's eyes* may wink? The absurdity of the prayer is apparent. The argument for Cupid is worth absolutely nothing until it has been shown that the coming of Night would as a matter of course put him to sleep. But reason teaches and testimony establishes that night is exactly the time when that interesting young gentleman is particularly wide awake. However much *Juliet* might desire even Love's eyes to close on that occasion, it is ridiculous to make the advent of "love-performing Night" the cause of his going to *sleep*; whereas it is entirely consistent

that she should wish Night to cause those prying or wandering eyes which are personified in Rumor's, to close, that *Romeo* may come to her "untalked of and unseen."

When we remember the vital importance of the secrecy of *Juliet's* nuptials, and the desire which must have been almost uppermost in her heart, that *Romeo* might be seen entering her chamber window by no one who would talk of or rumor it, and knowing, as we do, that Shakespeare and his audiences were in the habit of seeing such people typified in the person of Rumor, covered with open eyes, and painted full of tongues, can there be any doubt that "rumoures eyes" were the words written by the poet? \*

#### ACT V. SCENE 1.

"*Rom.* I pray thy poverty, and not thy will."

Thus the first folio and the quarto of 1609; but "pray" is evidently a misprint for *pay*, which appears in the earliest quarto, 1597; for, as Mr. Dyce has pointed out, the last words of *Romeo's* immediately preceding speech to the *Apothecary* were, "take *this*"—money, of course.

#### SCENE 3.

"*Par.* I do defy thy conjurations."

"Both Mr. Knight and Mr. Collier having rejected the reading '*conjurations*' for the misprint 'commiseration,' and Mr.

\* The probability that the letter *m* held the place in manuscript which *n* takes in the printed word, is increased by the fact that in the early quarto impressions the word is spelled "runnawayes."



**TIMON OF ATHENS.**

ACT II. SCENE 2.

*"Flav.* Takes no account  
How things go from him, nor resumes no care  
Of what is to continue. Never mind  
Was, to be so unwise, to be so kind."

“Nor resumes no care,” is quite surely a misprint for “no reserve, no care,” which is the reading found in Mr. Collier’s folio. But there is another confessed obscurity in this passage, in the last line, to obviate which I confidently offer the following correction of a very natural typographical error.

“Never mind,  
Was *truly* so unwise, to be so kind,

Mr. Collier's folio offers *surely*, which is right as to sense, but not like enough in the trace of the letters.\*

\* *Truly* had been on the margin of my Shakespeare for a long time before the discovery of Mr. Collier's folio. I find in Mr. Singer's *Vindication* &c., that he has a corrected folio in which *truly* also appears.

"*Flav.* I have retir'd me to a wasteful cock,  
And set mine eyes at flow."

Sir Thomas Hanmer interpreted "wasteful cock" '*a cockloft or garret!*' and Bishop Warburton agreed with him. Pope had the effrontery to change "wasteful cock" to *lonely room*. These be thy editors, O Shakespeare! Mr. Knight thinks it should be "*from a wasteful cock,*" &c. Why this trouble? Honest *Flavius* says,

"when our *vaults have wept*  
With drunken spilth of wine,     \*     \*     \*  
\*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*  
I have retired me to a *wasteful cock*  
And set mine eyes at flow."

How can this be tortured to mean any thing else than that, when the casks were running with wine, which was wasted on *Timon's* parasites, *Flavius* sat down by them, and wept at the ruinous profuseness of his master's hospitality. It seems impossible that this should not have been the first and only construction put upon the passage by any reader.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Flam.* Thou disease of a friend, and not himself!  
Has friendship such a faint and milky heart,  
It turns in less than two nights! O ye gods  
I feel my master's passion! This slave  
Unto his honour, has my lord's meat in him:  
Why should it thrive, and turn to nutriment,  
When he is turned to poison!"

There is no semblance of a reason for calling *Lucullus*

"a slave unto his honour." Monck Mason is evidently right in reading,

"This slave  
Unto *this hour* has my lord's meat in him."

*Lucullus* was the very reverse of punctilious as to honor : to suppose that "this slave unto his honour," means 'this slave to *Timon*,' is puerile in the extreme,—unsufferable : whereas the short time which has passed since *Lucullus* was the guest of *Timon* is pointed out by a truly Shakespearian turn of expression, according to Mason's correction of the obvious typographical error.

## SCENE 2.

"*Luc.* What a wicked beast was I, to disfurnish myself against such a good time, when I might have shown myself honourable! how unluckily it happened, that I should purchase the day before for a little part, and undo a great deal of honour!"

Purchasing "for a little part" has no meaning. The obscurity of the sentence is owing to a transposition of the printing office ; which Jackson, himself a practical printer, thus easily corrects.

"how unluckily it happened that I should purchase *the day before* ; and for a little part, undo a great deal of honour."

## ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Tim.* Let me look back upon thee. O, thou wall  
That girdles in those wolves, dive in the earth,  
And fence not Athens."

Thus the original is carefully pointed ; but subsequent editions, except Mr. Knight's, have removed the period in the first line, placed an exclamation mark in the second, and begun there a new sentence, reading thus :

"Let me look back upon thee, O thou wall  
That girdles in those wolves! Dive in the earth  
And fence not Athens."

What a wrong to Shakespeare and his readers! *Timon*, leaving Athens in disgust, turns to look back upon it,—the place of his triumphs and his humiliation. He pauses and ponders on his life and the experience he has had of his fellow men in Athens, and then breaks forth, "O thou wall that girdles in those wolves, dive in the earth!" The change from the original accomplishes nothing but the destruction of the finer beauties of the passage,—making *Timon* turn to look upon a wall instead of upon Athens.

## SCENE 2.

"2 *Serv.*                      As we do turn our backs  
From our companion, thrown into his grave;  
So his familiars to his buried fortunes  
Slink all away."

We do not turn our backs *from* our buried friends, we turn them *to* or on them : nor do flatterers slink away *to* buried fortunes,—they slink *from* them. By one of those almost unaccountable accidents which occur in the printing office, these words have changed places, as Monck Mason has pointed out. We should evidently read :

"As we do turn our backs  
*To* our companion, thrown into his grave ;



So his familiars *from* his buried fortunes  
Slink all away.

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"*Flav.* Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt  
Since riches point to misery and contempt?  
Who would be so mock'd with glory, or to live  
But in a dream of friendship."

In Mr. Collier's folio this passage is insufferably altered in three several places. It is evidently corrupt; but the change of a letter only is necessary to make it plain. Obviously "*to*" is a misprint for *so*, in the last line but one. Read,

"Who would be so mock'd with glory, and *so* live  
But in a dream of friendship!"

The *so*, in both cases, meaning 'thus,' of course. *Timon* having been mocked with glory, and the friendship in which he had trusted proving but a dream, the Steward asks—who would be rich to be "so mocked," or "so live."

### SCENE 3.

"*Tim.* Thou art a slave, whom fortune's tender arm  
With favour never clasped, but bred a dog,—  
Had'st thou, like us, from our first swath, proceeded  
The sweet degrees that this brief world affords  
To such as may the passive drugs of it  
Freely command, thou would'st have plung'd thyself  
In general riot

Johnson would change "drugs" to *drudges*; and Mr.



Evidently "remedied" is misprinted for *rendered*, as Mr. Dyce suggests. Read,

"But shall be *rendered* to your public laws  
At heaviest answer."

**JULIUS CÆSAR.**

ACT I. SCENE 2.

"*Cas.* When could they say, till now, that talk'd of Rome,  
That her wide walks encompass'd but one man."

If correction be necessary in these lines, the suggestion of *walls* for "walks" made by Theobald, and adopted also in Mr. Collier's folio, must be accepted.

ACT II. SCENE 1.

"Bru. O, then, by day  
 Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough  
 To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none conspiracy;  
 Hide it in smiles, and affability:  
 For if thou path thy native semblance on,  
 Not Erebus itself were dim enough  
 To hide thee from prevention."

Difficulty has been found by all editors and commentators in "path." I thought it might be a misprint for *put*, and afterwards found that Coleridge had proposed the same word with confidence. But none of the editors or commentators have noticed that the quarto of 1691 reads,

"For if thou *hath* thy native semblance on," &c.

I do not mean to say that *hath* is the word ; but neither do I believe that it is a mere misprint in the old quarto. 'Hath' is very frequently used by Shakespeare and his contemporaries for 'have ;' and in his time, and long after, the bow of the letter *h* was short, while the second stroke was brought far below the line. Three examples occur on the fac-simile page of Mr. Collier's second folio, published with his *Notes and Emendations*.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

In the original, the following passage is evidently not properly distributed among the characters :—

"*Cin.*—*Caska*, you are the first that rears your hand.

*Cæs.*—Are we all ready? What is now amisse  
That *Cæsar* and his Senate must redresse!"

"Are we all ready?" plainly does not belong to *Cæsar*, and has been made a continuation of *Cinna's* speech to *Casca*. But it more probably belongs to *Casca*; who, as the leader of the onset, would naturally ask the question. This is the distribution recommended first by Ritson, and recently by Mr. Collier, on the credit which he gives to his folio.

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"*Cæs.* I must prevent thee, *Cimber*.  
These couchings and these lowly courtesies," &c.

Mr. Collier's folio suggests, with more than plausibility,

*crouchings* for “couchings.” But it is by no means certain that Shakespeare has not used the words convertibly in several instances.

#### ACT IV. SCENE 1.

“*Ant.* A barren-spirited fellow ; one that feeds  
On objects, arts, and imitations,  
Which out of use, and stal'd by other men,  
Begin his fashion.”

How did *Lepidus* feed or exist “on *objects*, arts,” &c. ?  
Out of question there is an error of the press ; and we should read,

“one that feeds  
On *abject arts* and imitations.”

MACBETH.

ACT I. SCENE 7.

"*Mac.* If the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease, success."

I find that this passage is considered obscure : all sorts of alterations are proposed in it by editors and commentators of every grade and period. It has always seemed to me, and yet seems to be perfectly clear. By "if the assassination could trammel up the consequence," *Macbeth* evidently means,—‘if the killing of *Duncan* could also set aside the consequences of such an act.’ “His” refers to *Duncan*, not to the assassination, as some, Johnson among them, appear to think, and “surcease” means ‘ending,’ ‘decease,’ ‘death ;’ and the sentence may, if it must, be paraphrased,—‘If, in the act of killing *Duncan*, I could protect myself against the consequences of such an act, and obtain by his death, success.’ See *Rape of Lucrece*, near the end.

**"If they surcease to be that should survive."**

**The commentators complain that this whole soliloquy is**

turgid and involved. Such would have a thunder-cloud as pellucid as a dew-drop.

### ACT II. SCENE 1.

"*Mac.* Is this a dagger which I see before me?"

This dagger was made visible to the eyes of the audience in Germany, when *Macbeth* was first performed there ; and, considered in the light of poetic truth, may as well be seen as the Ghost of *Banquo*. The Ghost should appear in the face of the actor, as the dagger does. But, perhaps even nowadays it is necessary for a mixed audience that *Banquo* should appear, as he was made to do by Shakespeare for the audiences of his day. The difference between the ghosts in *Macbeth* and that in *Hamlet* is very remarkable. The former, no less than this dagger, are the pure creations of a guilty mind, and are visible only to the guilty person ; the latter, on the contrary, being an actual visitant from the other world, is visible to the soldiers and to *Hamlet's* friend as well as to himself.

### SCENE 2.

"*Macb.* Will all great Neptune's Ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No: this my hand will rather  
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
Making the green—one red."

Those who have pondered with wondering admiration upon this grand passage, will be amused and vexed at a supposed typographical error, when they find the hemistich printed thus :

"Making the greon one, red."



But it is not an error of the press. There are those, (Mr. Dyce among them, it would appear,) who, depending upon the careless punctuation of the first folio, read this fine line thus inanely ; though what or who is the “green one” to be made red, they do not inform us. Was the power of mere punctuation to turn the sublime into the ridiculous ever before so strikingly exemplified !

## SCENE 3.

“*Len.* The night has been unruly ; Where we lay,  
Our chimneys were blown down : and as they say,  
Lamentings heard i' the air ; strange screams of death ;  
And prophesying, with accents terrible,  
Of dire combustion, and confus'd events,  
New hatch'd to the woful time. The obscure bird  
Clamour'd the livelong night : some say, the earth  
Was feverous and did shake.”

This passage has occasioned not a little conflicting comment. Mr. Knight has changed the punctuation, so as to make the obscure bird prophesy ; and Steevens would have the “prophesying” and not the “confused events” “new hatch'd to the useful time.” But all this is needless ; and arises from a misunderstanding of the word “prophesying.” As used here, and in some portions of the Bible and books contemporary with its translation, it does not mean ‘foretelling,’ but ‘uttering strange or important things,’ or ‘announcing solemnly’ that which has already taken place. (See Proverbs xxxi. 1, Luke i. 67.)

## ACT III. SCENE 4.

[*The Ghost of Banquo rises, and sits in Macbeth's place.*]

“*Macb.* Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,

Were the grac'd person of our Banquo present;  
 Who may I rather challenge for unkindness,  
 Than pity for mischance!

*Rosse.* His absence, sir,  
 Lays blame upon his promise. Please it your highness  
 To grace us with your royal company!

*Macb.* The table's full.

*Len.* Here's a place reserv'd, sir.

*Macb.* Where?

*Len.* Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your highness!

*Macb.* Which of you have done this?

*Lords.* What, my good lord?

*Macb.* Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake  
 Thy gory locks at me."

\* \* \* \* \*

*Macb.* —Give me some wine: fill full:  
 I drink to the general joy of the whole table.

*Ghost rises.*

And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;  
 'Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirst,  
 And all to all.

*Lords.* Our duties, and the pledge.

*Macb.* Avaunt! and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!"

Some have gravely argued that the first Ghost is that of *Duncan*, others that the second Ghost is his; but in addition to the consideration that the stage directions of the original were for the guidance of the prompter, and must necessarily have been explicit upon such a point as this, it is to be observed that the Ghost rises in each case upon *Macbeth's* allusion to *Banquo*. The Ghost of *Banquo* rises at first when *Macbeth* wishes for *Banquo*: with what propriety then, when *Macbeth* again wishes for *Banquo*, could the Ghost of old king *Duncan* respond to the call? But as I have before remarked, and as Kemble and Tieck held, there is no poetic or dramatic necessity for the actual appearance of any ghost; as an examination of the text, above quoted, will show. With what consistency do the audience see that which *Macbeth's* guests cannot see?

The Ghost exists only in his distempered brain ; its visibility is but a manager's concession to the popular love of the horrible.

## SCENE 6.

"*Len.* Who cannot want the thought how monstrous  
It was for Malcolm and for Donaldbain  
3217 To kill their gracious father!"

Thus this passage is invariably printed. "Who *cannot*" seems to me unquestionably wrong. "Who cannot want the thought" means, 'Who is not able to be without the thought ;' which is evidently the very reverse of *Lenox's* opinion.

In this perplexity (which, however, I have not seen noticed, except by Jackson, who suggests one of his usual mere proof reading remedies, which is, as usual, altogether vain), I, of course, considered the whole context ; which is

"The gracious Duncan  
Was pitied of Macbeth :—marry, he was dead ;  
And the right valiant Banquo *walked too late* ;  
Whom you may say, if 't please you, Fleance killed ;  
For Fleance fled. Men must not *walk too late*.  
Who cannot want the thought how monstrous  
It was for Malcolm and for Donaldbain  
To kill their gracious father!"

It is to *Banquo* that *Lenox*, in his ironical vein, applies the second time, as well as the first, the phrase "walked too late." Now, *Macbeth* seized the opportunity of *Banquo's* late walking, to put him out of the way, chiefly because *Banquo* more than suspected who was the real perpetrator of the crime, which *Lenox*, ironically conforming

to general report, ascribes to *Malcolm* and *Donaldbain*. This suspicion was obviously the reason for the murder of *Banquo* by the order of *Macbeth*. May we not then remove the point after the last 'late' and read thus, making the passage declarative instead of interrogative ?

"the right valiant Banquo walked too late;  
Whom you may say, if 't please you, Fleance killed;  
For Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late  
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous  
It was for *Malcolm* and for *Donaldbain*  
To kill their gracious father."

That is,—'Men, who will think that the alleged murder of *Duncan* by his sons is a crime too monstrous for belief, must be careful not to walk too late.'

#### ACT IV. SCENE 1.

"*Macb.* Rebellious dead, rise never, till the Wood  
Of Birnam rise," &c.

Thus the original. "Rebellious dead rise never," &c., was changed by Theobald to "Rebellious head," &c. But the context seems to require "*Rebellion's* head," a correction which was made by the present writer some years ago, and which has recently been found in Mr. Collier's folio. I have before noticed a similar coincidence with regard to the following passage in the same Scene. *Macbeth* learns that *Macduff* has fled to England, and, in the course of a declaration of prompt, and energetic policy, says,

"No boasting like a fool;  
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool:  
But no more sights."

For "sights," we should unquestionably read *flights*. The old-fashioned long *s* caused the mistake. I may be excused for remarking here, that these emendations and most of those now for the first time made public, were shown to a few friends and fellow students of Shakespeare, two or three years before the discovery of Mr. Collier's folio.

## SCENE 3.

In the original, *Macduff* tells *Malcolm*,

"You may  
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,  
And yet seem cold."

"Convey" is evidently an easy misprint for *enjoy*, which is substituted for it in Mr. Collier's folio. But this is one of those emendations which crave mature consideration as to their idiomatic propriety before they are received into the text.

## ACT V. SCENE 2.

*Cathness* obviously does not mean to say that *Macbeth*

"Cannot buckle his distemper'd cause  
Within the belt of rule,"

but his "distempered *course*," which reading is found in Mr. Collier's folio.

## SCENE 3.

The substitution in Mr. Collier's folio of

"Cleanse the stuff bosom of that perilous *grief*,

"Cleanse the stuff bosom of that perilous *stuffe*,"

seemed to me at first an acceptable correction of a very probable typographical error ; but subsequent reflection has convinced me that the phrase in the original is quite in Shakespeare's manner.

#### SCENE 4.

"*Malc.* For where there is advantage to be given  
Both more and less have given him the revolt."

What advantage was to be "given" by revolt ? It seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that this word is a misprint ; especially as it occurs in the next line. Mr. Collier's folio has *gotten*. But *gotten* would hardly be read "given," while *gained* might be,—easily. Should we not read ?

"For where there is advantage to be *gained*  
Both more and less have given him the revolt."

The *Variorum* has comment upon comment on the passage ; but this very obvious correction does not appear to have occurred to any editor.

# HAMLET.

## ACT I. SCENE 2.

*Enter Horatio, Bernardo, and Marcellus.*

"*Hor.* Hail to your lordship!

*Ham.* I am glad to see you well ;

Horatio, or I do forget myself.

*Hor.* The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

*Ham.* Sir, my good friend ; I'll change that name with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—

Marcellus?

*Mar.* My good lord,—

*Ham.* I am very glad to see you ; good even, sir.—

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?"

It seems incomprehensible to me that there could be the least difficulty in understanding this passage ; as in fact it seems with regard to nine tenths of the passages upon which explanatory notes have been written. *Hamlet's* "Good even" makes trouble. *Marcellus* has said in the first Scene, "I this morning know where we shall find him ;" and therefore some of the commentators say that *Hamlet* could not bid his visitors "good even." Of these, some therefore have deliberately changed "even" to "morning ;" another, Jackson, attempts to get out of the difficulty by his knowledge of the composing case, and says that the line should be,

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"I am very glad to see you good :—even, sir."

That is, that *Hamlet* means that he is even with *Marcellus*, who has just called him "good!" Mr. Knight very justly suggests that "even" was at that time used at any time after mid-day.

Richard Jhones, who published *Promos and Cassandra*, is the best commentator on the passage. I have quoted this sentence from his advertisement once before ; but it is worth quoting here again : —"and if by chaunce thou light of some speache that seemeth dark, consider of it with judgment, before thou condemne the worke : for in many places he is driven both to praise and blame with one breath, which in readinge wil seeme hard, and in action appeare plaine."

No other clue is needed. How can any one with the scene in his "mind's eye" avoid intuitively understanding it thus ? *Hamlet* has three visitors, who find him alone : being a well bred gentleman he speaks to all of them ; and being a prince, he addresses each one in a manner suited to his degree. In his old friend and schoofellow he expresses interest, and asks,

"And what make you from Wittenberg!"

But breaking off, to bestow civility upon his other guests, he, says, interrogatively, to one (whom he thinks he recognizes, and who, by the present, the preceding and the subsequent Scenes, is shown to be the more important of the two),

"Marcellus!"

On finding by the reply of *Marcellus* that he is right, he bestows a brief welcome,



"I'm very glad to see you;" &c.

and then turning to the third and least important person, whom he does not recognize, he merely says, "Good even, sir." Having thus satisfied the demands of courtesy, he returns immediately to that which interests him, and says to *Horatio*,

"But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?"

The passage is natural, simple, and colloquial in the highest degree; its sense palpable, it would seem, to the dullest perception. But on what sentence of Shakespeare may we not look for a critical and explanatory, if not a confusing note, when Mr. Knight thinks it not impertinent to explain *Hamlet's* "Thrift, thrift Horatio," by saying "*Thrift, thrift*. It was a frugal arrangement,—a thrifty proceeding,—there was no waste." *Quousque tandem abutere patientia nostra!*

### SCENE 3.

"*Pol.*                               for they are brokers  
Not of the eye which their investments show,  
But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,  
The better to beguile."

What meaning can possibly be tortured from "breathing like . . . bonds?" Is there the least doubt that Theobald discovered the typographical error, and corrected it properly, in reading,

"Breathing like sanctified and pious *bonds*  
The better to beguile!"

In the same sentence these “implorators of unholy suits” are called “brokers,”—the old term for ‘bawd.’

#### SCENE 9.

“*Ghost.* And for the day confin'd to fast in fires.”

Heath's conjecture that “fast in fires” is a misprint for “*lasting* fires” seems to me to be a judicious correction of a very probable error. It has been passed by, almost unnoticed; but as it occurs in Mr. Collier's folio, renewed attention has been recently directed to it.

#### ACT II. SCENE 2.

*Ham.* . . . . and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fires, why it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!”

This magnificent passage does not appear in the tragedy as it was published in 1603. It was added by Shakespeare when he enlarged *Hamlet* “to almost as much again as it was.” In the tragedy, as it was first produced and as it was printed in 1603, this passage appears thus,—in limping verse, it will be noticed :

“Yes faith, this great world you see contents me not,  
No nor the spangled heuens, nor earth, nor sea,  
No nor Man that is so glorious a creature,  
Contents not me, no nor woman too, although you laugh.”

It is at least a strange coincidence, that in a thin quarto which bears the title : " Beware of Pickpurses, or a Caueat for sick folkes to take heede for vnlearned Phisitions, and vnskillful Chyrurgians, By F. H. Doctor in Phisick. Imprinted at London 1605," is a sentence sufficiently like *Hamlet's* speech in sentiment and phraseology to make it more than probable, that Shakespeare had seen it before he enlarged the Tragedy. One very remarkable and singular expression in the latter, " this goodly frame the earth," appears almost exactly in the former :

" Thus doth this base and lewd Couzener mocke God, and despise Man, for whose cause the Eternall created the *goodly* and beautifull *Frame of the World* : and in whose Bodie whatsoever is more largely in that Spatious, and Gorgious Pallace, and Theater delineated, is more briefly comprised, and, as it were, Epitomised, and represented [in] a short Summe or Viewe. Against this Noble Creature, the small Counterfeit of the great GOD, he doth oft times rage more sauagely than any wilde Beare or Tygar," &c. p. 16.

The book, my copy of which is the only one I ever saw or heard of, is composed of two parts ; the first being written in Latin " by a learned German," Martin Oberndorffer. This is called *Dissertatio de vero et falso Medico*, or, as F. H. translates it, " The Anatomyes of the True Physition and the counterfeit Mountebanke." The second part, which is the original production of the translator of the first part, is " A discouery of certaine Stratagems, whereby our English Emperikes haue bene obserued strongly to oppugne and oft times to expugne their poore Patients Purses." The passage quoted is from the Dissertation of Oberndorffer, who was a medical author of some repute in Germany at the beginning of the seventeenth century. His *Dissertatio de vero et falso Medico* was published at Lau-

ingen in 1600 ; and Watts' *Bibliotheca Britannica* records the date of the publication of Dr. F. H.'s translation, as 1602, one year before the date of the earliest edition of *Hamlet*. But, as my learned friend, Dr. Cogswell, suggests to me, Watts had probably never seen the volume in question, and the edition of 1605 is the first : it bears no allusion to any other. But, however this may be, it would be interesting to compare the original German work (no copy of which exists in this country) with F. H.'s translation, to discover whether the latter found that very remarkable expression in his author, or furnished it himself to him, or adopted it from a new play, which he had just heard, i. e. *Hamlet*. Throughout the two passages, however, there is a remarkable sympathy of thought and similarity of expression as to the grandeur of the World and the dignity of Man.

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" *Ham.*                      for it cannot be  
But I am pigeon liver'd, and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter."

The absurdity of the change of "oppression" to *transgression* in Mr. Collier's folio, and of Mr. Collier's argument in support of it, have been shown in the second part of this volume. As Mr. Dyce is reported to be engaged on a new edition of Shakespeare, it is comforting to know that he thinks the change "nothing less than villainous"—*A Few Notes, &c.*, p. 140. But what shall be said of Mr. Singer, who also announces a new edition, and who would read,

"To make *aggression* bitter."

Felony, this ; and certainly without benefit of clergy ; for

it would seem impossible that any clerk could commit such an offence.

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Ham.* Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them."

Pope and others would read "*siege* of troubles," alleging that arms may be taken against a siege, but not against a sea, and that the similarity in the sound of the two words might easily have caused a substitution of one for the other. So it might : much more easily than Shakespeare could have written

"Or to take arms against a *siege* of troubles,  
And by opposing end *them*."

For, by line and plummet criticism, if it be a *siege* against which arms are to be taken, it is a *siege* which is ended ; for the siege then becomes the object against which the action is to be directed, and the last line must be :

"And by opposing end *it*."

But it is the troubles against which arms are to be taken, and by opposing we end *them*. "Sea" is but a picturesque, descriptive word in the sentence. Another writer would have said 'a throng of troubles' or something of that kind ; but Shakespeare said "sea," and by one word brings to our mind the imminent, ever succeeding woes which, innumerable, like the "multitudinous seas," sometimes overwhelm the soul. "Sea" makes the passage not only highly poetical and Shakesperian, but correct ; *siege* makes

it not only cautiously exact in following out a figure, and therefore un-Shakesperian, but incorrect to any mind which judges by other than a merely literal standard.—*A fortiori* these remarks apply to the suggestions to read *assay* or *assail* of troubles. It is mysterious to me that a doubt should ever have suggested itself, even to a child of moderate intelligence, about the passage as it stands in the original. Even in my boyish readings of Shakespeare this line was as comprehensible and as grand to me as it is now. I should have been inclined to doubt the sincerity or the sanity of any one who professed to find the passage obscure or faulty. But then I had not read Shakespeare's commentators.

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“*Oph.* Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with your honesty!”

This, the reading of the folio of 1623, is rejected, and the reading of the quartos, “with honesty,” is taken. Even Mr. Knight departs from his rule, and rejects his favorite—and justly his favorite authority, even although he admits that the alteration from the quarto is “clearly by design.” He does so, because “it appears to lessen the idea we have formed of *Ophelia* to imagine that she would put *her* beauty so directly in ‘commerce’ with *Hamlet’s* honesty.” I am past being surprised at a miscomprehension of one of Shakespeare’s characters, particularly of the character of one of his women;—yet I cannot but wonder where Mr. Knight finds any thing in the delineation of *Ophelia’s* character to cause him to lessen his ideas of her at finding her thus plain spoken. What does he think of the songs which she sings when derangement removes the restraint of pro-

priety from her mind ? On what do they show her thoughts to have been, in a great measure, fixed ?—for it is to be borne in mind that she is not distracted or wild, but simply unsettled. What does he think of her gross perversion of *Hamlet's* request in Act III. Scene 2, just before the Dumb Show begins ? With regard to the passage under consideration,—if a woman so far trust a man, and so far unbend herself as to speak of such matters *at all*, it seems difficult to find the peculiar and added impropriety of this expression, “your honesty,” to a lover in *Hamlet's* situation and in Shakespeare's time.

However, Mr. Knight's course is but a remnant of the practice of the eighteenth century, which was, to think that the ideas which the commentator or the actor had formed of a character, were more just than those of Shakespeare himself, and to take the development of character out of the hands of the poet into those of his restorers and improvers, for the stage or the closet. As for instance,—the acting *Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard III.*, &c. &c.

## SCENE 2.

“*Ham.* 'Tis now the very witching time of night ;  
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world : Now could I drink hot blood,  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on.”

Mr. Dyce, turning from the original folio to the quartos, advises, that in *Hamlet's* exclamation, as it stands in the original,

“Now could I drink hot blood,  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on,”

we should transpose three words and change one letter, to read,

“And do such business as the *better* day,” &c.

He says, that in the reading of the quartos,

“And do such business as the *bitter* day,”

“bitter” was a misprint for *better*; and the editor or printer of the folio, “not perceiving that it was a misprint, made his *stupid transposition*.” And he quotes, to sustain “better day,” Milton’s,

“Hail *holy light*, offspring of Heaven,” &c.

The suggestion is plausible, and the quotation not amiss; but O! Mr. Dyce, if you love us humble lovers of Shakespeare, if you venerate his mighty genius, if you would preserve your well-earned reputation, let not your acuteness and your learning lead you astray; and spare us, spare us that “bitter business” which “the day”—any day, worse or better, lit by the sweet light of heaven—“would quake to look on!” Spare us, good Mr. Dyce! our keen relish of this most Shakesperian morsel, or we shall lose not only that; but some one, sheltering himself under your eminent name, and emulating your ingenuity, will be proposing to read a certain line in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*,

“In maiden *fancy*, *hesitation* free.”

This undeniably gives a sense, and requires but the transposition of two words and the change of two letters in the original. But still, as there is the best reason—the testimony of the folio—for believing that Shakespeare wrote,



"In maiden meditation, fancy free."

and as, from use, we have become somewhat partial to the line in that form, we would not willingly see the 'ingenious' alteration made.

With no other feelings would we all regard the change of *Hamlet's* "bitter business" which "the day would quake to look on" into a "business" which "the *better* day would quake to look on." Better strike the lines from the soliloquy, than thus emasculate them.

### SCENE 3.

This Scene, in which *Hamlet* finds the *King* on his knees alone, immediately after the Play, and yet does not avenge his Father's death, is altogether omitted in the stage copy. What an outrageous liberty ! how injurious to the intent of the author ! *Hamlet* is a man of contemplation, who is ever diverted from his purposed deeds by speculation upon their probable consequences or their past causes, unless he acts too quickly and under too much excitement for any reflection to present itself,—as in the last Scene of this Act and of the last Act. In the present instance he finds the *King* alone, and in a situation that seems to tempt revenge. He instantly determines on the deed, half draws his sword, steps forward—but the idea suggests itself "and so he goes to heaven ;" and in a moment the avenger of blood is converted into the moral philosopher ; he discovers that such a death would be no expiation, and gladly seizes this excuse for procrastinating the execution of his task.

By the omission of this Scene, *Hamlet's* character is not developed according to the author's intent ; which is an offence unpardonable. There are certain Scenes and ar-

rangements of Scenes which have naught to do with the progress of the play or the development of character, and which the improvement in stage business since Shakespeare's time renders superfluous, perhaps ; and these may be omitted, though they should be eliminated with great caution and reverence ; but to touch a line which portrays character, because it is thought superfluous or inconsistent by commentators or stage managers, is much as if a man who liked aquiline features should knock off the nose of the Apollo Belvidere, and say 'it's a small matter, only a nose ; the face is a face without it ; and besides, I would have made it Roman if I had made the statue.' Wise above what is written ! will they never learn that they did *not* make the Apollo, or *Hamlet*, or *Romeo*, or *Lear* !

#### ACT IV. SCENE 4.

"*Ham.* I will be with you straight. Go a little before.

[*Exeunt* Roa. and Guil.

How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge ! \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* Now, whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on the event,  
A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,  
And, ever, three parts coward,—I do not know  
Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do* :  
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,  
To do't."

This Scene is omitted in the folio of 1623, and also in the acting copy ; but if the object of the play be the representation of *Hamlet*—and its action certainly has little other point—how serious an omission is this. *Hamlet* was one who speculated without reasoning, whose high-wrought

reveries hardly ever assumed the firmness and consistency of thought, who was unyielding without firmness, determined without purpose, who contrived without plan and felt without acting. *Hamlet* himself, in the closing soliloquy of this Scene,—to introduce which was evidently Shakespeare's only object in writing it,—gives us the key to his indecision in that self-anatomization which is the habit of such natures. They know the action of their own minds, and burrowing in the blind heaps of speculation which press upon them, they unearth only their own hidden motives. They have an intellectual perception of the excellence of action; but, fascinated by musings which hardly attain the dignity of contemplation, their noble purposes never take form; and, led on through a dreamy labyrinth of speculation, they die before they reach the busy day of the actual world. Sadly enough, too, they are all the while conscious that their years glide away from them and leave naught behind; and when their last day comes, they

“close their dying eyes  
In grief that they have lived in vain.”

“Eheu! fugaces Postume, Postume,  
Labuntur anni.”

#### SCENE 5.

“*King.* That I am guiltless of your Father's death  
And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgment pierce  
As day does to your eye.”

Johnson says that,

“It shall as level to your judgment pierce,”

which is the reading of the original, is "less intelligible" than,

"It shall as level to your judgment 'pear,"

which is the reading of the quarto of 1611, and which appears in all the modern editions except Mr. Knight's. If Johnson had not said so, it would be difficult to believe that he could say so. What can be more intelligible than that a conviction should pierce to the judgment, as level [*i. e.* as directly, as 'point blank'] as light does to the eye. This is clear sense and forcible comparison. But use 'pear [appear], and nonsense and confusion ensue. The lines as they stand in the authentic text assert,—'it [the conviction] shall pierce as level to your judgment, as day does [pierce] to your eye:' but use 'pear,' or 'appear,' and the assertion would be that—'it shall appear as level to your judgment as day does [appear] to your eye.' But how does, or how can, day appear level to the eye? The absurdity is palpable. In the copies in general use, Johnson is followed and 'pear' is given. The original text should be restored without question.

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"*King.* Laertes, I must common with your grief,  
Or you deny me right."

This is the text of the original folio, and also of the earliest complete quarto, 1604, yet on the authority of the quarto of 1611, "common" has been changed to *commune*, in all editions except Mr. Knight's. There is a note by Steevens in the *Variorum* about 'commune' being anciently pronounced 'common,' and Mr. Knight has one to the

same effect ; but how inferior is this “ winnowed opinion ” to that of Boswell, who, taking the word “ common ” in its obvious sense, remarks, “ surely the word *common* in the folio means ‘ I must be allowed to participate in your grief, to feel *in common* with you.’ ” In the homeliness of the word lies the strength of the passage.

## ACT V. SCENE 2.

“ *Ham.* He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he (and many more of the same breed, that, I know, the drossy age dotes on) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter ; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions ; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.”

Caldecott explains the last part of this passage thus,— “ which carries them (*i. e.* enables them to pass current) through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions (*i. e.*, all judgments ; not the simplest only, but the most sifted and the wisest).” Mr. Dyce says this is “ the common interpretation of the passage,” and justly adds, “ to suppose that ‘ the most fond and winnowed opinions ’ could mean ‘ all judgments, *not* the simplest *only*, *but* the most sifted and the wisest,’ is little short of insanity.”

It is to be hoped that Mr. Dyce erred in supposing this to be the common interpretation of the passage. The meaning seems clear, and to be one of those very obvious significations which it is a marvel that any commentator or any educated reader could fail to apprehend. Mr. Dyce’s own reading, adopted from Warburton, seems as far from the truth as Caldecott’s explanation. Mr. Dyce would read, “ the most fand (fanned) and winnowed opinions ; ” and he

quotes good authority for the use of both 'fanned' and 'winnowed' in the same sentence.

But all this is from the purpose. *Osric* is a type of the Euphuist or affected courtier of Shakespeare's time, who was a hair-splitter in thought, and absurdly dainty and extravagant in expression. Therefore Shakespeare makes *Hamlet* describe *Osric* as one who ("with many more of the same breed") has "only got the tune of the time," which was "a kind of yesty collection which carries them [the Euphuists] through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions:" that is, they go through and through [they stop at no absurdity in] the most fond [affected or foolish] and winnowed [elaborately sought out] opinions. It is difficult to imagine how "opinions" could be supposed by Caldecott to mean 'judgment,' or "carries" to signify 'enables them to pass current.' "Fond" is continually used as 'affected' or 'foolish' by the earlier English writers.

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It is purposely that I do not notice in detail the corruptions of the text of this play in all the editions. To point them all out would be to write a volume. The ordinary copies, printed from the *Variorum* text, are a vile compound of the texts of the quartos of 1604 and 1611 and the folio of 1623. On the other hand, Mr. Knight's laudable reverence for the latter text has caused him to disregard the corruptions which evidently deform it. We need a text formed upon that of 1623 as supreme authority; but carefully corrected by the quartos.

**ACT I. SCENE 1.**

“The most precious square of sense” is a phrase not readily apprehended nowadays. Mr. Collier’s folio reads, “precious *sphere* of sense,” by which, however, nothing is gained; for the ‘square of sense’ is quite as comprehensible as the ‘*sphere* of sense.’ Mr. Singer goes in this instance even beyond the folio, and would read “the *spacious sphere* of sense.” This is certainly more comprehensible than the line as it was left by Mr. Collier’s MS. corrector; and the typographical error which it involves is quite possible. But although there is at least no necessity for changing “square” to *sphere*, the change of “precious” to *spacious* is more plausible. If the text be altered at all, we should read,

The original text, however, is comprehensible, and has the

smack of Shakespeare's style about it ; and consequently must not be disturbed.

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"Cord.                      make knowne  
It is no vicious blot, murther, or foulness,  
No unchaste action, or dishonor'd step  
That hath deprived me of your grace and favour."

Thus this passage appears in the original. "Murder" is evidently forced into the second line. It has no proper place in the category of blemishes enumerated by *Cordelia*. The word, as the reader will observe, was formerly written "murther," and so appears in the text, where it is an easy and undeniable mistake for *nor other*, which is substituted for it by Mr. Collier's folio, in which the line stands consistently :—

"It is no vicious blot, *nor other* foulness."

## ACT II. SCENE 1.

"Edm. But that I told him the revenging Gods  
'Gainst Parricides did all the thunder bend."

Thus the original folio. The quartos read "all *their* thunders," in which they are followed by all the modern editions except Mr. Knight's. It is, of course, quite possible that the words in the folio are misprints ; but then they were fortunate mishaps indeed. There is a grandeur in the thought of the gods bending all the thunder against parricides, which dwindles away in the particularity of "*their* thunders."



## SCENE 4.

"*Fool*. Let go thy hold, when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again: I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That, sir, which serves and seeks for gain,

And follows but for form,

Will pack, when it begins to rain,

And leave thee in the storm.

But I will tarry, the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly:

The knave turns fool, that runs away;

The fool no knave, perdy."

Johnson proposed that the last two lines of the *Fool's* rhymes should be read,

"The *fool* turns *knave* that runs away,

The *knave* no *fool*, perdy."

Johnson was slow, and not sure, in his apprehension of imaginative poetry; but upon a question which appealed to cool common sense, his decisions are always half right, at least. The whole context, not only of the rhymes, but the previous remarks of the *Fool*, make some such change inevitable; and yet none has ever been adopted, except by Capell, who printed the lines thus:

"The *fool* turns *knave* that runs away,

The fool no knave, perdy."

This perhaps is all that is necessary.

## ACT IV. SCENE 6.

"*Glo.* If Edgar live, O bless him!—

Now fellow, fare thee well. [*He leaps and falls along.*]

*Edg.* Gone, sir! farewell."

In the original folio there is no stage direction here, though one appears in the quarto of 1608. Is it not evidently misplaced there, and in all the modern editions? It is absurd for *Edgar* to bid farewell to *Gloster*, after the latter has taken his leap from the supposed cliff. *Edgar* had just before pretended to retire at *Gloster's* request; and when the latter bids him farewell, he, keeping up the deception, replies,—‘have you gone, sir? then farewell;’ and then *Gloster* leaps. Read thus:

“ *Glo.* If *Edgar* live, O bless him!—  
Now fellow, fare thee well.  
Gone, sir! farewell.  
*Edg.* [ *Gloster* leaps and falls along. ]  
And yet I know not,” &c,

“ *Edg.* Ten masts at each make not the altitude  
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell.”

Evidently we should read, as has been conjectured:

“Ten masts at *reach* make not the altitude,” &c.

### ACT. V. SCENE 3.

“ *Lear.* Lend me a looking-glass;  
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,  
Why, then she lives.”

These lines contain no difficulty for any one to whom Shakespeare could be made comprehensible; yet Mr. Collier's corrector, for “stone,” proposed *shine*,—which is simply harmless impertinence. But Mr. Singer, in rejecting

this proposition, adds, as if possessed by the spirit of an attorney, that "the word was, most probably, *same*," and that we should read,

"Lend me a looking-glass;  
If that her breath will mist or stain the same," &c.

And thus we should have *Lear*, in the climax of his agony, talking like "the young man of the name of *Guppy*!" How shall we be protected against such wanton outrages? The most distinguished Shakesperian scholars spring forward, with laudable alacrity, to shield us from anonymous and irresponsible injury;—*sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*

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"*Lear*. And my poor fool is hang'd!"

Incredible as it must appear to any one who has fathomed the depths of feeling in this tragedy, there are learned men, who really believe that *Lear* in these words refers not to *Cordelia*, but to his court *Fool*. Unmindful that *Edmund* has just said that he had ordered *Cordelia* to be hanged, unmindful that the dead *Cordelia* is in *Lear's* arms, and that he continues,

"No, no, no life;  
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life  
And *thou* no breath at all?"

and, above all, insensible to the unutterable tenderness and pathos, which is contained in that expression "poor fool," as applied by *Lear* to *Cordelia*!

# OTHELLO.

## ACT I. SCENE 1.

*"Iago. Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave."*

The expression with which I have heard this line read by intelligent people on and off the stage, justifies me in pointing out, what would otherwise seem too obvious to admit such superfluity, that "knave" is used here and in other passages of the play, not opprobriously, but in its more primitive sense of 'servant.' Thus *Iago* again says,— "whip me such honest knaves," and *Roderigo*, "a knave of common hire, a gondolier." So *Antony* speaks to his boy *Eros* as "My good knave *Eros*. (*Ant. and Cleop.* Act IV. Sc. 2.)

—

*"Rod. In an extravagant and wheeling stranger."*

If any change were needed in this line, "*wheedling* stranger, which appears in Mr. Collier's folio, would be unexceptionable. But what can express *Roderigo's* idea of a vagabond adventurer better than the original text?

## SCENE 2.

"*Brab.* Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals  
That waken motion."

The original has "*weaken* motion," which some would retain. But compare this with the following passages from the next Scene of this very tragedy :

"*Brab.* Of spirit so still and quiet that her *motion*  
*Blushed* at herself;"

"*Iago.* But we have reason to cool our *raging motions*, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts," &c.

These instances of the use of the word by Shakespeare himself in the same play, and the supposed influence of love philtres in his day, make it plain that "motion" means 'amorous desire,' and that "weaken" of the folio—which has been retained by Mr. Knight—has been properly changed to *waken*. The convincing comparison has been made, as indeed it could not have failed to be, by the earlier editors and commentators. But it was objected by Henley to their arguments, and with some appearance of reason, that in the instances quoted, "the word derives its peculiar meaning either from some epithet or restrictive mode of expression with which it stands connected." This demurrer is easily set aside by the fact, that in Shakespeare's day the word was used in that sense *absolutely*; as for instance—in the following passage from Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, the tale from which Shakespeare derived the plot of *Measure for Measure*, and which was published in 1582, *Cassandra*, the *Isabella* of the comedy, has agreed to comply with the conditions of *Promos*, the *Angelo* of the tale.

"To greeve you with the hearing of Cassandra's secrete

plaints were an injurie, vertuous ladies, for they conoluded with their good fortune, and everlasting fame ; but for that her offence grew neyther of frayltie, free wyl, or any motion of a woman, but by the meere inforcement of a man, because she would not staine the modest weedes of her kynde, shee attired her selfe in the habit of a page, and with the bashfull grace [of] a pure virgin, she presented wicked Promos Andrugioes precious ransome."

## SCENE 3.

" Oth. yet she wish'd  
That heaven had made her such a man."

There are many who, influenced by the unfounded notion that because *Desdemona* was chaste and modest she was also passionless, shame-faced and constrained, consider this passage to mean that *Desdemona* wished that heaven had made her of as bold and adventurous a spirit as *Othello's* story showed him to be. Not so, evidently. She wishes that heaven had made such a man for her. Is this immodest? If it be, it is much less so than her direct request to *Othello*, which he thus repeats in the next few lines :

"She thanked me ;  
And bade me if I had a friend that loved her,  
I should but teach him how to tell my story  
And that would woo her."

Could any thing be plainer, except a direct avowal of love in explicit terms? *Brabantio's* understanding of *Desdemona's* wish is evident enough. He exclaims,

" I pray you hear her speak ;  
If she confess that she was half the wooer," &c.

Is it not plain that long before *Othello* found the "

hour" *Desdemona* was sick at heart with love for him? "Subdued" ere that, to "the very quality of her lord," she was ready to do any thing, short of positive wrong—perhaps even that—to obtain his love; as after her marriage she was ready to suffer any thing to retain it.

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"*Des.* That I did love the Moor to live with him,  
My downright violence and *storm* of fortunes  
May trumpet to the world."

Some, the acute and learned Mr. Dyce among them, would read with the quarto of 1622, "*scorn* of fortunes." This is comparatively commonplace, un-Shakesperian, and inconsistent with the "downright violence," which precedes it. The authentic text should not be disturbed. *Desdemona* means that she went, as we say, 'right in the teeth' of fortune.

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There can be but few of my readers who have not seen Hildebrandt's picture of *Othello* and *Desdemona*, which seems to me one of the most fascinating of modern pictures, and without exception the most painful. To see such a love as Hildebrandt has painted in *Desdemona's* eyes, given by such a woman to a great grinning negro with rings in his ears, is surely enough to convert any one to Calhounism. True, some women might be supposed to find consolation in the fact that the rings are rubies, but not such a woman as this *Desdemona*. Had the painter in his mind the famous comparison, "like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear?" It would seem so. But this reminds me that Shakespeare

nowhere calls *Othello* an Ethiopian, and also does not apply the term to *Aaron* in the horrible *Titus Andronicus*; but he continually speaks of both as Moors; and as he has used the first word elsewhere, and certainly had use for it as a reproach in the mouth of *Iago*, it seems that he must have been fully aware of the distinction in grade between the two races, although his notion of their distinctive traits was perhaps neither very true nor very clear. Indeed, I could never see the least reason for supposing that Shakespeare intended *Othello* to be represented as a negro. With the negroes, the Venetians had nothing to do, that we know of, and could not have, in the natural course of things; whereas, with their over-the-way neighbors, the Moors, they were continually brought in contact. These were a warlike, civilized and enterprising race, which could furnish an *Othello*: whereas the contrary has always been the condition of the negroes. I am aware that John Quincy Adams endeavored to prove that *Othello* was a negro, and that Retzsch has made him so in his Outlines; but to me the Ex-President seems to reason with less than his usual acumen, and the great draughtsman, no less than Hildebrandt, to fail in embodying Shakespeare's noble captain.

The reasons for supposing *Othello* to be a negro, are few and are easily set aside, which is not the case with those which show him to be a Moor. The most conclusive of the former is *Roderigo's* calling *Othello* in the first Scene, "thick lips;" but this is the result of Shakespeare's want of exact information. He had doubtless never seen either a Moor or a negro, and might very naturally confuse their physiological traits; but a man of his knowledge and penetration could not fail to know the difference between the position and the character of the nation which built the Alhambra, and that which furnished their stock in trade to the Englishmen, who, when he wrote *Othello*, were supplying the



plantations in the West Indies with slaves, and soon after his death introduced negro slavery into Virginia. In addition to this epithet, "thick lips," there are several allusions to *Othello*, as having the visage of the devil, as black, and as being, therefore, the very reverse of attractive to a woman like *Desdemona*. But this proves nothing; for Shakespeare has applied these identical epithets to so eminent and undeniable a Moor as the *Prince of Morocco*. In the *Merchant of Venice*, Act I. Sc. 2, *Portia* says, upon the announcement of the royal Moor,—“if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil I had rather he would shrive me than wive me.” He himself prays her, “Mislike me not for my complexion;” and she, when he has selected the wrong casket, says, “May all of his complexion choose me so;” and yet he was not jetty black, like a negro, but tawny; for the stage direction, in Act II. Sc. 1, in the quartos, is—*Enter Morochus, a tawny Moor, all in white*. Plainly, then, the devilish visage, attributed to *Othello*, and the assumed repulsiveness of his color, makes him out, in Shakespeare’s estimation, only a Moor, and not even a very black Moor, at that.

But there is direct evidence that he was a Mauritanian, and one of lofty lineage. *Iago*, in his ribald shouting under *Brabantio’s* window in the first Scene of the play, calls *Othello* “a Barbary horse;” and the Moor himself, when defending his conduct in regard to *Desdemona* (Act I. Sc. 2.) says:

“Tis yet to know,  
Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,  
I shall promulgate, I fetch my life and being  
From men of royal siege.”

And in Act IV. Sc. 2, the following passage plainly points out Mauritania as the native place of *Othello*, whither he

was about to retire after a soldier's life, to spend with *Desdemona*, in repose, the mellow autumn of his days.

"*Iago*. Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice, to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

*Rod*. Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

*Iago*. O, no; he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident; wherein none can be so determinate, as the removing of Cassio."

But, to return to the picture of the great Dusseldorf artist, which has vitality and force enough to be made the text for an essay upon the play,—Hildebrandt's *Othello* has, in addition to the Congo features, the negro gaudiness of dress and extravagance of action. He is repulsive, and we wish to see a solid wall built up between him and the lovely lady who looks upon him with such overflowing but perverted love. This *Desdemona* is thought by many, if not by the majority, to be too womanly, too earnest, too passionate, too splendid. *Desdemona* is a character which can hardly be embodied by a painter with the certainty of winning very general approval. Such is the interest she inspires, that almost every imaginative mind has formed to itself its own ideal of her, any deviation from which by an artist will be deemed a blemish. But I must dissent from the opinion entertained by many on this point, and defend the painter's conception. I think that her character is misconceived by the objectors. Because her father speaks of her "delicate youth;" calls her a "maiden never bold; of spirit still and quiet," and says that she was "so opposite to marriage that she shunned the wealthy, curled dearlings of our nation," some seem to think her a good little girl, who spoke when spoken to, said 'sir,' washed the cups and saucers after breakfast, and had serious thoughts of entering a convent.



They seem to forget that she is spoken of as of "high and plenteous wit and invention,"—that on the very night of her marriage, she speaks before the Senate boldly, though modestly, to her father of the change in her relation,—that she says to the *Duke*, who asks her if she will go with *Othello*,

"That I did love the Moor to live with him,  
My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
May trumpet to the world."

They forget that *Cassio* says she has "an inviting eye," though "right modest," and that she herself told *Othello*—not yet her declared lover—that "she wished that heaven had made her such a man," and bade him if he had a friend who loved her, to "teach him how to tell his story, and that would woo her." Is this indicative of a timorous girl? Is there not here calm self-reliance, deep emotion, and an earnest nature? And are these at all inconsistent with youth, modesty, a quiet spirit and indifference to all suitors save one? It seems to me that the careful observer would look for these in the gentlest, most reserved of those who have attained to the full development of a complete feminine organization. Why, the very fact that *Desdemona* gave her love, unasked, to a mature man, a famous captain, one "rude in speech, and little blessed with the soft phrase of peace," shows why she shunned "the wealthy, curled dearlings."

Shakespeare's *Desdemona* is a girl of vivid imagination, quiet self-reliance, much tenderness, and unbounded devotion, who had attained to early womanhood without the influence of a mother's counsel—for we hear nowhere of her mother. Being such a one, she becomes, as such women ever do, "subdued to the very quality of her lord." She shows herself, in her conduct to him, almost the very oppo-

site of what she was to all others, and gives up for him her station, her father's love, her happiness, and finally her very life itself, almost without a question or a murmur.

But Hildebrandt's *Desdemona* is found too magnificent, too stately, for her whom the "house affairs" would draw from the company of her father and *Othello*. Surely this objection is founded on a misconception. *Desdemona's* house affairs were not affairs of pots and pans. In those times, all ladies under queenly rank overlooked their households; and *Desdemona* was the mistress of her father's house; for, as we have seen, her mother was dead, and in superintending the establishment of a man of his degree, she would find quite enough to occupy her, without being called upon to soil the tips of her fingers, or hold up the train of her robe. *Desdemona*, too magnificent! She who was the daughter of a Venetian magnifico, a Senator! who had the wife of a man of *Iago's* rank for her waiting woman! a noble lady of that queenly city, of which Byron says,

" Her daughters had their dowers  
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East  
Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers,  
In purple was she robed, and of her feast  
Monarchs partook and deemed their dignity increased!"  
*Childe Harold*, Canto IV. 2.

How could a painter make such a woman other than magnificent? There is no fault in Hildebrandt's conception, except that great, grinning blackamoor.

## ACT II. SCENE 1.

"2 *Gent.* The chidden Billow seems to pelt the Clouds—  
The wind-shak'd-Surge, with high and monstrous Maine  
Seemes to cast water on the burning Beare."

Thus the authentic folio. The quarto of 1622 reads "chiding billow," which has been almost universally followed by the editors, who also read "monstrous main." But does it need argument to show the higher poetry of "the chidden billow," and its apposition with "the wind-shaked surge?" And what is a "high and monstrous main?" Is it not plain that Shakespeare's idea was identically the same with Byron's?

"For I was, as it were, a child of thee,  
And trusted to thy billows far and near,  
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here."  
*Childe Harold*, Canto IV. 184.

This expression of Byron's is no unconscious plagiarism; for at the time when it was written there was no edition of Shakespeare in which the word was not printed *main*.

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"*Cas.* The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,  
Traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel."

That "ensteep'd" is a misprint, there cannot be a doubt: Mr. Knight's explanation that the rocks were "*steeped* in the water"—like tea, is perhaps his most unfortunate effort at sustaining the manifest mistakes of the first folio. The quarto of 1622 reads *enscERP'd*, "of which," says Mr. Steevens, "every reader may make what he pleases." Surely it requires no very great ingenuity to discover that "enscERP'd" was a misprint for *enscARP'd*. The scarp of a fortification is the shelving slope on that side next the ditch. It was used in that sense in Shakespeare's day; and he could not have chosen a better word to picture to us the position and appearance of "the gut-



This natural and dignified entrance of *Othello* is not seen on the stage. There, his first speech and those following by *Montano* and *Iago* are cut out, in order that the Moor may rush in with a stride and a glare, and bellow forth "Hold for your lives! Why, how now, ho!" And this is called 'making a point!'

### ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Clown.* Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose thus?"

Is not this knowledge of a minute provincial peculiarity an evidence that Shakespeare knew more of Italy than by books or hearsay? *Apropos*, it is strange that Mr. Collier's folio corrector did not change "speak" to *squeak*.

### SCENE 3.

"*Iago.* I do beseech you,—  
Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess,  
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague  
To spy into abuses: and, *oft*, my jealousy  
Shapes faults that are not,—*I entreat you, then,*  
From one that so imperfectly *conjects*,  
*You'd* take no notice; nor build yourself a trouble  
Out of his scattering and unsure observance:"

Thus this passage stands befogged, and with a text patched up from quarto and folio, in all editions, except Mr. Knight's. He retains the text of the folio, which is:

"I do beseech you,  
Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess

(As I confess it is my nature's plague  
 To spy into abuses, and of my jealousy  
 Shapes faults that are not) that your wisdom  
 From one that so imperfectly conceits  
 Would take no notice," &c.

This is perfectly clear and connected, with the exception of one typographical error—"Shapes" for *shape*. *Iago* says that it was his nature's plague, to spy into abuses, and of his jealousy to *shape* faults that are not. There is no more common error in actors and compositors than to make a verb agree with the noun next preceding it, regardless of its antecedent nominative. Read :

"(As I confess it is my nature's plague  
 To spy into abuses, and of my jealousy  
*Shape* faults that are not)."

—

"*Emilia*. My wayward husband hath *a hundred times*  
*Woo'd* me to steal it."

Again,

"*Emil*. What handkerchief?  
 Why, that the Moor first gave to *Desdemona*;  
 That which *so often* you did bid me steal."

This shows either that quite a long time passes between the first and third Acts,—because *Emilia* did not attend on *Desdemona* until after the first Act,—or else that the poet was forgetful, or rather irrespective, of time when a train of circumstances was to be strongly marked.



## ACT IV. SCENE 2.

"*Oth.* A fixed figure for the time of scorne.  
To point his slow unmoving finger at."

Few passages have provoked more comment than this, which appears thus in the quarto. In the folio it stands :

"The fixed Figure for the time of Scorne  
To point his slow, and mouing finger at."

Whatever difficulty the passage may present in other respects, I have not yet lost my astonishment on my first perusal of the notes upon it, at finding that there was any one who could hesitate a moment as to the meaning of the word "unmoving." Some have chosen the reading of the folio—"and moving," on the ground that if the finger of scorn be "slow," it must move, and that therefore "unmoving" is an incongruous epithet ! But surely the finger of scorn is "unmoving," because it does not move *from its object*, but points at him fixedly and relentlessly. To say that a thing is "slow" and then to *add* that it moves, is certainly worthy only of an idiot.

Rowe read "the *hand* of scorn ;" but in the first place this is needless, and in the next it deteriorates the passage to make the *hand* of scorn point *his finger*. If any change from the reading of the quarto be needed, that proposed by Mr. Hunter, is most simple, most natural, and most consistent with the sense of the passage. He supposes that "the particles 'for' and 'of' have changed places, and would read,

"The fixed figure *of* the time *for* Scorn," &c.

But though this is the best change yet proposed, it has, on

"Of all the old commentators there actually appears to be nobody left, but Mr. Boswell, to favor the Indian claim! To such authority his adherents are heartily welcome. But to show the value of his criticism, he says that the word *tribe* (which, as Malone truly remarks, is in favor of the reading, in the text, as applicable more especially to the Jewish nation) is 'constantly used, at this day, in speaking of the Indians!' Unluckily, however, it was so used, in his day, as applicable particularly to the North American Indians, who never had any *pearls* to throw away, and of whom Shakespeare and his contemporaries could have known little or nothing. And we are not aware that the word 'tribe' had been then, or is now, familiarly applied to the people of the East Indies, to whom the allusion must, of course, have been made, if at all.

"But apart from this weight of testimony from the older commentators, we are of those who think there is quite enough in the expression itself to make it perfectly clear how Shakespeare wrote it. The expression is one of generalization, demanding, as must be the case in all good poetry, the ready sympathy and understanding of the reader. Whether he understand the particular allusion or not, at least, it should be of that character that he might, or ought to have known it; and not drawn from a source so remote as to be out of his reach, or so insignificant as to be beneath his notice. On this ground, we are willing to set up any possible *Judean* against any *Indian* that can be imagined.

"But to pursue the question of internal evidence somewhat further, we are of the opinion that there is much in the passage itself to aid us in forming a right conclusion. In the first place, the word *tribe*, as we remarked above, is one peculiarly appropriate to the Jewish people, so constantly used, in his time, as in ours, and so familiarly applied by Shakespeare; as, for instance, in the mouth of Shylock:

'Cursed be my *tribe*,  
If I forgive him.'

'Jubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my *tribe*.'

'For sufferance is the badge of all our *tribes*,' &c.

"The epithet 'base' affords us also a very fair opportunity of speculation on this subject. This term, in the times of Shakespeare and those long antecedent and subsequent, would be held peculiarly descriptive of the Jewish people. The word, in the common understanding, would unquestionably fit any Jew and all Jews. So far from there being any propriety, there would have been a manifest impropriety in using the epithet, as denoting the characteristics, so far as understood, of East Indians in general. Then, as to any special story of an individual Indian throwing 'a pearl away,' and of such a feat being popularly known, or known at all,—where is it?

"We believe, therefore, that we must come back to the general faith on this point, that the allusion is to the tragic story of Herod and Mariamne. Mr. Steevens objects to this theory, on the ground that it would not constitute a good poetical figure, and would be, in fact, unworthy of Shakespeare, to make Othello compare his own desperate act with another act resembling it in essential particulars. That as, for instance, it would be no figure to say 'crystal resembles crystal'—so, for Othello to liken this his murder of Desdemona to the murder of Mariamne by Herod, would be equally no figure, since it would be comparing transactions in themselves essentially identical. The mistake of Steevens will be apparent, by considering that Shakespeare makes no comparison in any such sense. He introduces a *medius terminus*. He makes Othello say, that he, in the one case, as Herod in the other, not—killed his wife,—but, *threw a pearl away*. And this metaphorical comparison of the two acts, by likening them to a third, which is itself figurative, vindicates, as it constitutes, the propriety of the similitude. As, in the example above cited, the figure would be complete to say,—

Like mine, beneath the sun's diffusive rays,  
Your crystal half reflects the diamond's blaze.

"In order, therefore, to give some plausible account of the allusion, Steevens relates, and, as some uncharitably assert, invents a story of a Jew, who, not able being to obtain the price he claimed for a certain precious pearl, hurled it into the sea. But

a difficulty would here arise as to the propriety of applying the epithet 'base' to the supposed Jew, on account of this transaction. The pearl was apparently his own, to dispose of as he saw fit; and, viewing it in one light, the act would seem rather to raise him above the merely mercenary spirit popularly attributed to his race. This conduct might be extravagant and desperate; but no more *base* than the act of Cleopatra, in swallowing the pearl dissolved at her table; or than the destruction of her books, by the Sibyl, in the presence of Tarquinius Priscus; and we never heard the epithet used in connection with her very extraordinary conduct.

"But we would modestly suggest what may, perhaps, tend to throw light upon this point, and which seems hitherto to have escaped notice,—that the word 'Judean' in reality means something more than *Jew*. A Judean is, in fact, an *inhabitant of Judea*; and thus, in correspondence with Shakespeare's common mode of expression, the word might naturally, and with more force would refer to Herod, King of Judea, as *the Judean*, *par excellence*,—as representing the State."

Thus far Mr. Lunt; and in addition to his remarks I will only point out, what appears to have escaped the observation of all who have written upon this passage, that the very phraseology implies,—absolutely requires, an allusion to a particular story. The words are all particular and definite. Mr. Boswell quotes a passage from Habington, in which "the unskilfull Indian," "'mong the waves scatters" bright gems; and another from Howard, in which "Indians" "cast away" a pearl; and these passages the Rev. Mr. Dyce (*Remarks*, &c. p. 244) thinks "prove decidedly that *Othello* alludes to no particular story, but to "the Indian, as generally described." To Mr. Boswell's quotations, he adds the following, from Drayton's *Legend of Matilda*:

"The wretched Indian spurnes the golden Ore."

But in this, as in the others, not only is the Indian "generally described," but the act. No specific deed is referred to ; there is a mere allusion to a characteristic of the Indian. Not so in *Othello's* speech. In that, a particular person and a particular act must be alluded to, because *Othello* likens himself not to the Indian who *throws* a pearl away, but to "*the base Judean*" who "*threw* a pearl away richer than all his tribe." The reference is to some particular story, specific and unmistakable ; and as the American Indians, who alone had tribes, had no pearls, and as the story of the base Judean, Herod, who says of Mariamne, in the old play,

"I had but one inestimable *jewel*—  
Yet I in suddaine choler *cast it downe*  
And dasht it all to pieces,"

—as this story had marked affinities with *Othello's* position, and was well known to Shakespeare's public, can there be a shadow of a doubt that it was the story referred to, and that we should not disturb the reading of the authentic folio ?

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ACT I. SCENE 5.

“*Alex.* So he nodded,  
And soberly did mount an Arme-gaunt Steede,  
Who neigh'd so hye, that what I would haue spoken  
Was beastly dumbe by him.”

Thus the text of the original folio, with an evident error in "armegaunt." This has been changed to *termagaunt*,—the most common reading—*arm-girt*, *arrogant*, and *war-gaunt*. Of all these, *arm-girt*, proposed by Hanmer, seems to me the most suitable word, by far. But is it not possible that the compositor made a transposition of the first two letters, and adding the very easy mistake of *g* for *q*, printed "armegaunt" for *rampaunt*? This sorts well with what *Alexis* says of the high neighing of the horse.

ACT II. SCENE 2.

"*Eno*. Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,  
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,  
And made their bends adornings: at the helm  
A seeming mermaid steers; the silken tackle  
Swells with the touches of those flower-soft hands,  
That varely frame the office."

There is undeniable obscurity in,

"tended her i' the eyes,  
And made their bends adornings;"

and no attempt to dissipate it has been successful, to my apprehension. To interpret "tended her i' the eyes" 'waited upon her in *her sight*,' is to attribute a deplorably feeble use of language to Shakespeare in one of his finest descriptive passages; and to suppose, with Johnson and Steevens, that it means 'discovered her will by her eyes,' is not much better. Monck Mason would read,

"So many mermaids, tended her i' the *guise*,"

—of mermaids, of course; and would construe "their bends" to mean the curves of their tails, which they managed so gracefully as to make them ornamental! Mr. Mason was not jesting; and neither am I, in dissenting from this caudal commentary, which, however, I commend to the notice of Mr. Barnum's puff inditer, on occasion of the next arrival from the Fejee Islands.

Warburton would read,

"And make their bends *adorings*."

But were *Cleopatra's* attendants under any necessity to bend at all, except in obeisance to her, that they should "*make their bends adorings*?"

These two lines are doubtless corrupted, and hopelessly.

As to the remainder of the passage, Mr. Collier asks, "Why or how, was the silken tackle to 'swell with the touches of flower-soft hands?' " and adds that "we ought undoubtedly, with the old corrector [of his folio of 1632], to amend the text to,





*Antony* brought no guests. Mr. Collier's folio is plainly correct in reading,

"And let the queen know of our *gests*" [i. e. exploits].

## ACT V. SCENE 3.

"*Dol.*                      Would I might never  
Oretake pursu'de successe, but I do feele  
By the rebound of yours, a greefe that suites  
My very heart at roote."

Thus the original text, in which "*suites*" is an evident and a very easy misprint for *smites*, which was suggested by Mr. Barron Field, and to which it is changed in Mr. Collier's folio. It had been altered to *shoots*, which appears in most editions; but this violent change from the original text must yield to a word which is not only far better, but which requires the alteration of but a single letter in the text of the authentic folio.

## CYMBELINE

### ACT I. SCENE 2.

This Scene introduces us to the finest female creation of Shakespeare's genius, that paragon of perfect womanhood — *Imogen*. Having observed, even among those of finer perceptions, a seeming incomplete appreciation of this noblest and loveliest character in the world of fiction, I intended to attempt an expression of my own ; but having read Mrs. Jameson's *Characteristics of Women* since the first half of this volume was stereotyped, I gladly acknowledge that that accomplished lady has left no one an excuse for not confessing *Imogen* the ideal woman, and me no opportunity to become her champion. There is hardly a trait of the character, however delicate, which Mrs. Jameson has not appreciated, and placed in such a light, that those who need such guidance will be led to see and feel all the beauty of the picture, and those who do not, will yet follow with sympathetic pleasure the analysis which her congenial hand has effected with such mingled reverence, grace, and skill. Upon two or three minor points, however, I will here express a difference of opinion with Mrs. Jameson, and will allow as many short paragraphs upon different passages re-

ferring to *Imogen*, written years ago, to remain uncanceled in my notes.

Mrs. Jameson thus expresses, in a single paragraph, with equal exactness and delicacy, her view of the outline of the character of *Imogen*.

“ To conceive her aright, we must take some peculiarities from many characters, and so mingle them, that, like the combination of hues in a sunbeam, the effect shall be as one to the eye. We must imagine something of the romantic enthusiasm of *Juliet*, of the truth and constancy of *Helen*, of the dignity and purity of *Isabel*, of the tender sweetness of *Viola*, of the self possession and intellect of *Portia*,—combined together so equally and harmoniously, that we scarcely say that one predominates over the other. But *Imogen* is less imaginative than *Juliet*, less spirited and intellectual than *Portia*, less serious than *Helen* and *Isabel*: her dignity is not so imposing as that of *Hermione*, it stands more on the defensive: her submission, though entire, is not so passive as that of *Desdemona*,—and thus while she resembles each individual, she stands wholly distinct from all.”

This passage, whether intentionally or not on the part of the author, is slightly apologetic in its tone regarding *Imogen*, in so far as it sets forth other characters as excelling her in some one point, although inferior to her in many others. But in this, her fair apologizing eulogist has, unconsciously, perhaps, only the more clearly established the great merit of *Imogen's* character,—its perfect self poise and symmetry. It is only the extravagant romance of *Juliet*, the excess of her enthusiasm, which are wanting in *Imogen*: it is but the somewhat unfeminine preponderance of intellect in *Portia*, the austerity of *Isabella's* seriousness, and the tameness of *Desdemona's* submission which she lacks; for neither all the “ truth and constancy of *Helen*” nor all “ the tender sweetness of *Viola*” are denied to her by Mrs. Jameson, or could be. Her dignity is not so imposing as

that of *Hermione*, for the very good reason, that while *Imogen* is a bride in the first flush of perfected womanhood, *Hermione* is, when *The Winter's Tale* opens, the mother of a boy some ten years old at least. One is but a princess, while the other is not only a matron and a mother, but a Queen. As to such dignity and purity as that of *Isabella*, I am willing to believe that no one who has thoroughly studied that character will think the lack of any of its traits a loss to *Imogen*. Mrs. Jameson's only error of moment is in supposing that *Imogen* had something of the "dignity and purity of Isabel." She needed them not : she could not have them : the two characters have not a single point of contact. The married *Imogen's* instinctive chastity is as spotless as *Isabella's* premeditated vestalism, and is without the mental taint of deliberation. One, like the white robes seen by *Christiana* on the Dlectable Mountains, is protected from impurity by an inherent virtue ; the other, like a virgin fortress, is secured against assault by its forbidding frown and its terrible powers of resistance. And I may here appropriately point out, that as Mrs. Jameson's descriptive analysis of the character of *Imogen* is at once the most just, discriminating, and eloquent of all her efforts, so her attempt to persuade us into respect and regard for *Isabella* is as feeble and uninteresting as the product of her pen could be. She is evidently doing taskwork. Betrayed for once into a misapprehension of Shakespeare's design, she felt obliged to make out *Isabella* a model of intelligence, dignity and purity. But even admitting the truth of that which she has undertaken to demonstrate, it must be confessed that the work is somewhat lamely done, and to her eternal honor among men, and true women too, it is so. She who had such a sympathetic appreciation of *Cordelia*, *Rosalind*, *Miranda*, *Portia*, *Viola*, and above all of *Imogen*, could not without constraint attempt the eulogy of *Isabella*. No ; *Imogen*

lacks nothing of perfect womanhood, in intellect, in grace, in tenderness, in passion, in dignity, or in devotion ; but while other women, from a deficiency in some of these traits, or an excess in one, are distinguished by that which preponderates, she is "enthroned and sphered" by the possession and perfect balance of them all ; and yet she least of all of Shakespeare's women, if any can be least, is a made-up character. She manifests all her traits with a charm peculiar to herself. Mrs. Jameson places her among the Characters of the Affections. This is right ; but only right, because in perfect womanhood the affections sway the intellect.

Upon one other point Mrs. Jameson is somewhat at fault ; but for that her sex alone is accountable. She very justly remarks that *Imogen* is "a beauty ;" and the fact is that upon not another of his women has Shakespeare bestowed such wealth of loveliness as upon this one. He brings her charms before us in every way ; by the effect which they produce upon those around her, by the consciousness which we continually have of surpassing beauty in her presence, and by such particularity of description as he vouchsafes to no other of his heroines. But Mrs. Jameson speaks of her "delicacy and even fragility of person." No man would have formed such a conception of this embodiment of ideal womanhood. Mrs. Jameson had a *Viola* in her mind's eye. *Imogen* had not the heroic stature and the grand outlines of *Hermione* ; but men see her standing shoulder high by the noble figure of *Leonatus*, in that bewildering plenitude of loveliness which firm health alone can give.

#### SCENE 5.

"*Iach.* Ay, and the approbation of those that weep this lamentable divorce under her colors, are wonderfully to extend him ; be it but to for-

tify her judgment, which, else, an easy battery might lay flat, for taking a beggar without more quality."

"Without more quality" than what? This is not the text of the original, which gives "without lesse quality." The change was made by Rowe, who has been followed in nearly all the editions since his day. The original involves a grammatical contradiction which, although it occurs elsewhere in Shakespeare's works, should not be needlessly assumed to be the correct text. *Iachimo* means, and should grammatically say, "for taking a beggar *with* less quality." But is it not probable that Shakespeare wrote "without *this* quality?" *i. e.*,—"the partisans of *Imogen* wonderfully extend [magnify] the good qualities of *Posthumus*, if it be but to sustain her judgment, which else might be easily impeached for taking a beggar who had not this quality which they attribute to him, and which in a measure compensates for his want of rank and position.'

---

"*Post.* I will wage against your gold, gold to it: my ring I hold as dear as my finger: 'tis part of it.

*Iach.* You are a friend, and therein the wiser," &c.

"You are a friend" has no meaning consistent with the context; and yet it has been retained in all the current editions, in spite of a palpable typographical error discovered by Warburton, and pointed out and corrected by Theobald on his suggestion:

"You are *afraid*, and therein the wiser."

Dr. Johnson tried to make his readers believe that *Iachimo* told *Posthumus*, "You are a friend *to the lady*," meaning 'her lover; ' but *Posthumus* has but just said, "I profess



The exquisite purity, the firm, undalliating chastity of *Imogen* are indicated with unsurpassable tact and skill in this Scene, and by her first exclamation. She is slow to understand *Iachimo*; but the moment he makes his proposition plainly,—without an instant's delay, before a word of anger or surprise passes her lips, she calls for the faithful servant of her lord, to remove him who has insulted her and his friend's honor. Then her indignation bursts from her; but again and again she interrupts its flow with "What ho, *Pisanio*!" She holds no question with him who made such a proposition to her: she enters into no dispute of why or wherefore, draws no contrast herself between her truth and her husband's falsehood: she seeks nothing but the instantaneous removal of a man who has dared to attempt her chastity. Not only does she refuse all consideration of the right or wrong of his proposition, all going into the metaphysics of the question, but the mere proposal changes, on the moment, all previous relations between her and the proposer, although they were established by her husband himself. It is not until her pure soul, as quick to believe the good as it was slow to imagine ill, is quieted by the entire withdrawal of *Iachimo's* advances, and the assignment of a comprehensible, though not excusable reason for them, that she ceases to call for him who is in some sort the representative of her husband. *Château qui parle et femme qui écoute va se rendre.*

An exquisite touch of the master's hand occurs in a single pronoun in the succeeding speech of *Imogen*. Born a princess, she has given herself to *Posthumus*, a nameless man, as freely as if she were a peasant's daughter; and she is remarkable, with all her dignity, for her unassuming deportment; but the insult of *Iachimo* stings her into pride, and for the first and only time, she takes her state, and speaks of herself in the plural number. She says, "to ex-





## ACT III. SCENE 1.

"*Clo.* —and as I said, there is no more such *Cæsars*: other of them may have crooked noses; but to owe such straight arms, none."

*Cloten* is not a fool, but a shrewd, selfish lout. His ridiculous mental point is his conceit of himself personally and of his station; otherwise he has a good deal of what is called mother wit, which shows itself at various times during the play in such whimsical and pregnant remarks as this.

—

"*Cym.* *Cæsar's Ambition,*  
Which swell'd so much, that it did almost stretch  
The sides o' this World, against all colour heere,  
Did put the yoke vpon's; which to shake off  
Becomes a warlike people, whom we reckon  
Our selues to be, we do. Say then to *Cæsar*," &c.

Thus this passage stands in the original. The evident corruption is thus corrected in all modern copies:

"which to shake off  
Becomes a warlike people, whom we reckon  
Ourselves to be. We do say then to *Cæsar*," &c.

But *Mr. Collier's folio* gives the passage thus:

"*Cym.* *which to shake off*  
Becomes a warlike people, whom we reckon  
Ourselves to be.  
*Clo.* We do.  
*Cym.* Say then to *Cæsar*," &c.

There cannot be a doubt that this is the proper distribution of the text. It should be borne in mind that *Cloten* accompanies the remarks of *Cymbeline* with a sententious running commentary throughout the Scene.

## SCENE 4.

"*Imo. I false! Thy conscience witness:—Iachimo,*  
*Thou didst accuse him of incontinency;*  
*Thou then look'dst like a villain; now, methinks,*  
*Thy favour's good enough.—Some jay of Italy,*  
*Whose mother was her painting, hath betrayed him:*  
*Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;*  
*And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,*  
*I must be ripped;—to pieces with me!"*

The famous correction "*Who smothers her with painting,*" for "*Whose mother was her painting,*" was considered in detail in the examination of Mr. Collier's folio. It is the most striking and plausible of all the inadmissible changes proposed by Mr. Collier upon the basis of the corrections in that volume. To what has already been said, I will add a remark which will apply not only to this proposed reading, but to all arbitrary emendations,—that is, to use Malone's words again, to "all emendations not authorized by authentic copies printed or manuscript," which is, that even granting, for the sake of argument, that the proposed reading is better than that which is in the original folio, it cannot be received. *It is the function of no man to rewrite Shakespeare, even to improve him.* Our object is to arrive at what *he wrote*, not what, in *our* opinion, *he should have written*.

As to what he did write, we must take the best evidence, which is the authorized folio, when the text of that is not

made incomprehensible or inconsistent by the accidents of the printing-office. It will not do to say that if a suggested change be for the better, it must be accepted, because Shakespeare was sure to choose the most beautiful and forcible expression ; for this, it will be seen, puts it in the power of every critic, every reader in fact, to decide what *is* the most beautiful and forcible.

My unwillingness, therefore, to accept the new reading, is entirely irrespective of the comparative merits of the new and the old. The original, that text which was published by Shakespeare's friends, fellow-actors, and business partners, gives us a reading which is comprehensible, and which is not in its character at variance with the phraseology or tone of thought of Shakespeare's acknowledged works, or with the language and customs of his time ; and we are bound to receive it ; for we are seeking for Shakespeare's text, not for something better. Were "*Who smothers her with painting,*" the text of the first folio, and had Theobald, Malone, and Coleridge, with Mr. Collier, Mr. Halliwell, and Mr. Dyce at their backs, advocated "*Whose mother was her painting,*" the very reading which I now claim should not be changed,—I should battle just as stoutly for that which I now oppose ; and so would all true, docile, and humble lovers and students of Shakespeare.

Mr. Richardson, in his *Essays on some of Shakespeare's Dramatic Characters*, gives an explanation of this passage which probably but few of my readers have seen, and which appears to me to be entirely satisfactory.

"The *jay of Italy* is not only very unworthy in herself, but is so by transmitted, hereditary, and therefore by inherent wickedness. She derived it from her parents : *matri turpi filia turrior* : her mother was such as she is ; her picture, her portrait ; for the word *painting* in old English, was used for *portrait*. Shakespeare himself so uses it.

Laertes, was your father dear to you?  
 Or, are you like the *painting* of a sorrow,  
 A face without a heart?

"Perhaps, too, the poet uses that sort of figure which, according to rhetoricians, presents, as expressing some strong emotion, the consequent in place of the antecedent; or the effect for the cause. So that instead of saying the jay of Italy was the picture of her mother, Imogen says, more indignantly and more resentfully, that her mother was such another, was her very picture. So that she was inherently and hereditarily worthless, and capable of the arts of seduction."

Considering the use of the word "jay" and the fable of the jay in borrowed plumage, the reading "Whose *feather* was her painting," &c., which Capell obtained by modifying *Hanmer's* "Whose *feathers* were her painting," which the Oxford editor derived from a hint dropped by Theobald, is far preferable to "Who *smothers* her *with* painting."

In the same Scene, it is doubtless proper instead of

"you should tread a course  
 Pretty, yet full of view,"

to read with Mr. Collier's folio,

"you should tread a course  
*Priety*, yet full of view."

In the same speech,

"Now if you could wear a mind  
 Dark as your fortune is," &c.

should be,

"Now if you could wear a *mien*  
Dark as your fortune is, and but disguise," &c.

This suggestion is Mr. Singer's.

#### SCENE 6.

"*Imo.* I see a man's life is a tedious one;  
I have tyr'd myself, and for two nights together  
Have made the ground my bed. I should be sick  
But that my resolution helps me."

Can any manifestation of obtuseness exceed that of the corrector of Mr. Collier's folio, who, though *Imogen* says that she finds that a man's life is a *tedious* one," that for two nights she has slept upon the ground, and that she should be sick if it were not for her fortitude, supposes that "I have tir'd myself," should be "I have '*tir'd*' [i. e. attired] myself,"—'like a boy' being, perforce, understood. And yet Mr. Collier sustains the change!

#### ACT IV. SCENE 2.

"*Arr.* Brother stay here.  
[To Imogen.]  
Are we not brothers?  
*Imo.* So man and man should be;  
But clay and clay differs in dignity,  
Whose dust is both alike."

This passage, accidentally seen during the search for another, brings to my mind an attack upon Shakespeare which I once saw dragged into a criticism upon the performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; in which

the critic, mounting the tribune of Socialism, impeached the loyalty of Shakespeare to the true attributes of humanity, by accusing him of want of sympathy with the laboring classes. The same charge had been brought elsewhere and before. That it is altogether unfounded, no careful and thoughtful reader of Shakespeare need be told ; and the passage above quoted, in which a princess, addressing, as she supposes, two peasants, utters at once the most genial truth of genuine democracy, and the most cutting satire upon factitious aristocracy, is but one of many in which Shakespeare has shown his love and respect for Man irrespective of adventitious circumstances. But he was a Poet, an Artist, and, what is more, a Dramatic Artist ; and when he portrays men of a class, he makes them the type of a class as they existed, not as in future ages they might, could, would or should exist.

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“ *Gwi*. But his neat cookery ! He cut our roots in characters,  
And sauced our broths as Juno had been sick,  
And he her dieter.”

Another trait of *Imogen's* perfect and entire womanliness. In the midst of her own woe, she yet has quietly assumed the family cares of the cave, and looks with tasteful concern after the little enjoyments of those around her. She is not content with neat and appetizing cookery, but cuts the roots “in characters.”—And at this, female ‘intel ligences’ sneer. Women who sneer at such traits will, among the very men whom they hope to please,—the intellectual, get only their sneering for their pains.

## SONG.

*Gui.* Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
 Nor the furious winter's rages;  
 Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
 Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:  
 Golden lads and girls all must,  
 As chimney-sweepers come to dust.

*Arv.* Fear no more the frown o' the great,  
 Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;  
 Care no more to clothe, and eat;  
 To thee the reed is as the oak:  
 The sceptre, learning, physick, must  
 All follow this, and come to dust.

*Gui.* Fear no more the lightning-flash,  
*Arv.* Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;  
*Gui.* Fear not slander, censure rash;  
*Arv.* Thou hast finish'd joy and moan:  
*Both.* All lovers young, all lovers must  
 Consign to thee, and come to dust.

*Gui.* No exorciser harm thee!  
*Arv.* Nor no witchcraft charm thee!  
*Gui.* Ghost unlaid forbear thee!  
*Arv.* Nothing ill come near thee!  
*Both.* Quiet consummation have;  
 And renowned be thy grave!"

Can any one familiar with the cast of Shakespeare's thought, the turn of his expression, and the rhythm of his verse, believe that this song is his? It could not be at once tamer, more pretentious, and more unsuited to the characters than it is. What did *Guiderius* and *Arviragus*, bred from infancy in the forest, know about "chimney sweepers?" How foreign to their characters to philosophize on "the sceptre, learning, *physick*!" Will any body believe that Shakespeare, after he was out of Stratford grammar school, or before, wrote such a couplet as,

"All lovers young, all lovers must  
 Consign to thee, and come to dust."!



Has he throughout his works given us reason to suspect him, on any evidence short of his own hand and seal, of making these two lads, burying their adopted stripling brother by the mouth of their cave in the primeval forest, close their dirge with such a wish as,

“Quiet consummation have,  
And *renowned* be thy grave!”

That Mr. Knight should speak of these stiff, formal, artificial rhymes, worthy only of a verse-crazed cit affecting the pastorals, as "free, natural lyrics," is incomprehensible. The lines are the production of some clumsy prentice of the Muse. Collins's well known ode for this Scene, "To fair Fidele's grassy tomb," is a pretty thing in itself, but is quite as unsuited to the situation, and smacks of 1750, not of 1600. Think of *Guiderius* and *Arviragus* singing,

“But shepherd lads assemble here,  
And melting virgins own their love !”

No man could have written those lines who had not seen his mother's portrait painted by Kneller in a three-story head-dress and a hoop, and with a crook in her hand.

ACT V. SCENE 1.

"*Post.* But alacke!  
You snatch some hence for little faults; that's love  
To have them fall no more: you some permit  
To second illes with illes, each elder worse  
And make them dread it, to the dooers thrift."

Thus the original text, in the last line but one of which, "elder" is evidently a misprint for *ill the*, as Zach-



first folio was printed, such a passage as this would have been left in this chaotic state? It is impossible that it should have been so.

"*Post.*                      And so, great powers,  
If you will take this audit, take this life,  
And cancel these cold bonds."

Upon this passage Samuel Johnson, LL. D., lexicographer and 'great moralist,' remarks—"This equivocal use of *bonds* is another instance of our authour's infelicity in pathetick speeches." I have heard that there are bigoted admirers of Dr. Johnson, though having never met one, I am loth to believe in the existence of such a phenomenon ; but from the resentment which such may feel at the manner in which I have spoken of their ponderous idol, I shelter myself behind the bulwark of wrath which such a note as this will excite in the bosom of every man who has Anglo-Saxon blood in his veins, and can read and understand the English language. Shakespeare's "infelicity in pathetic speeches" is good, excellent good.

Of the rhyming dialogue in the Apparition in this Scene, I had merely written on my notes, before having read any comments upon the play—'this, beyond a doubt, is not Shakespeare's.' I found, however, that it had been so judged by almost all the critical students of his works. This was inevitable. The passage is evidently the production of some one about the theatre who had been in the habit of writing

such doggerel for the comedies in fashion just before Shakespeare took possession of the stage ; and Shakespeare probably consented to its introduction for peace sake, to please the author or a brother manager,—knowing, too, that there were those in his audience to whom it would be acceptable. It is ineffably flat, and altogether superfluous ; but it must not be removed from the place in which it appears in the authentic copy.

## SCENE 5.

"*Iach.* Your daughter's chastity—There it begins.  
 He spake of her, as Dian had hot dreams,  
 And she alone were cold.— \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \* Well may you, sir,  
 Remember me at court, where I was taught  
 Of your chaste daughter, the wide difference  
 "Twixt amorous and villainous."

See in this passage that *Imogen's* purity was not the mere accompaniment of a passionless nature, that contemptible nothing which some would elevate into a virtue. What is virtue worth which is not virtue of its own will,—which is the mere index of a want of capacity to be otherwise ? *Imogen* was chaste because she knew every thrill of passion. Had she been passionless, she would have been only an imperfect woman, and continent only, not chaste ; and continence is not a virtue : else our mothers were all vile.

## PERICLES.

### ACT I. SCENE 1.

"*Aub.* At whose conception (till Lucina reign'd)  
Nature this dowry gave to glad her presence,  
The senate house of planets all did sit," &c.

Commentators and editors find difficulty in this word "conception." Mason thinks it means 'birth;' Steevens would change it to *concession*, and Malone would introduce a long parenthesis. But is not the signification of the passage, taken together, very clear? and does it not evidently mean, that during the pregnancy of *Thaisa's* mother,—i. e. from conception till Lucina reigned,—the senate house of planets all did sit?

### SCENE 4.

"*Cle.* This Tharsus o'er which I have government,  
(A city on whom plenty held full hand),  
For riches strew'd herself even in the streets."

There have been some efforts to clear the obscurity of the last line, but no one has noticed Jackson's reasonable correction of a very easy typographical error, in reading,

"For riches strew'd *her pelf* even in the streets."

Jackson once in a while ventures a successful conjecture ; and contemptible as nearly every page of his book is, it should not be entirely disregarded by any editor, as we have seen by more important instances than the present.

### ACT III. SCENE 3.

"*Per.* Unscissor'd shall this hair of mine remain,  
Though I show will in't."

Plainly, Mr. Dyce is right in reading,

"Though I show *ill* in't."

BOSWELL.

### ACT IV. SCENE 6.

"*Lys.* If she'd do the deeds of darkness, thou would'st say."

Mr. Dyce suggests "the *deed* of darkness," which is unquestionably the correct reading.

### CORRECTION.

When writing the remarks on page 468 upon the hopelessly corrupted passage in Act V. Sc. 4, of *Cymbeline*, I had entirely forgotten that the last four leaves of that play are wanting in Mr. Collier's folio. We of course cannot know whether the passage was corrected or not. But other similar passages are left unchanged in quite sufficient numbers to preserve the validity of this strong argument against the authority of the volume.

## SONNETS.

THE question, who was the person to whom Shakespeare addressed his Sonnets, has long been considered one of the most obscure and interesting in the history of literature. But it seems to me, that a single attentive perusal of them should set all doubt at rest. Nearly all of them were evidently written for some other person or persons, according to the fashion of that day for lovers and others to seek assistance from those gifted by the Muse. Among other evidences of the existence of this custom, is the following amusing one in Drayton's Sonnets.

"A Witlesse Gallant a young Wench that woo'd  
(Yet his dull Spirit her not one iot could moue)  
Intreated me, as e'r I wish'd his good,  
To write him but one Sonnet to his Loue:

\* \* \* \* \*  
But with my Verses he his Mistres wonne,  
Who doted on the Dolt beyond all measure.  
But see, for you to Heaven for Phraze I runne," &c.

P. 260, ed. 1619.

In this way, perhaps, Shakespeare made the money by which he first got a footing in the theatre. The person, for whom most of these poems were written, may have been Mr. W. H., to whom the publisher wishes happiness and immortality, as their "only begetter." This supposition with regard to their origin, seems to me so natural, and so consistent with

Meres' phrase, "his sugared sonnets *among his private friends*," that I wonder not to have met it in my Shakesperian reading. A few of these Sonnets may have expressed his own feelings, and may have been addressed to his wife, whom I am persuaded he loved, and often saw. The allusions to the old age of the writer, or supposed writer, in some of the Sonnets, the 62d and 63d, for instance, show plainly that Shakespeare could not have written them in his own person at any time of his life, at least before 1609, when they were first published, and certainly not before 1598, when it is quite evident that they were well known among his private friends; for then he was but thirty-two years old. In some, the 71st and 72d, for instance, the self-degradation is sufficient to prove that Shakespeare spoke not for himself. Nos. 80, 83, 86 and 121, were evidently written to be presented to some lady, who had verses addressed to her by at least one other person than the supposed writer of these; for the praises of another poet are explicitly mentioned in them. No. 78 was addressed to one who was the theme of many pens, for it contains these lines:

"So oft I have invok'd thee for my muse,  
 And found such fair assistance in my verse,  
 As every alien pen hath got my use,  
 And under thee their poetry disperse.  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 In other's works thou dost but mend the style,  
 And arts with thy sweet graces graced be."

The reiteration of the immortality secured for the subject of the Sonnets, supposing them to have been addressed to one person or written by Shakespeare in his own name, would be entirely inconsistent with such a character as his must needs have been. He might possibly have uttered such a sentiment once, but never could have put it into



verse written in his own person again and again and again. But if we suppose the Sonnets to have been addressed to different persons, on the part of different persons, the difficulty does not exist ; as it was the fashion of the day to claim immortality for the subject of laudatory poetry. I cannot but think that No. 111 was written as an expression of his own feeling.

The supposition that Shakespeare's Sonnets were written in his own person, involves also the ridiculously absurd and inconsistent supposition, that the man who could be indifferent to the fate of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Lear*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet*, saw the promise of immortal fame in the Sonnets ; and that he who, when he became rich, did not think it worth his while to obtain from his fellow proprietors the right of issuing correct editions of plays already published surreptitiously, regarded these Sonnets as a sure passport to undying fame both for the subject and the writer. It is also important to notice, that inferior as the Sonnets are to the Plays, they are as much superior to *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece* ; and yet Shakespeare did not publish either of the former, eager as the public of that day was for any production of his pen, while he did publish the latter. Now why did he thus carefully put his most unworthy performances before the public, and allow his Dramas, and his Sonnets, only inferior to his Dramas, to "lie in cold obstruction and to rot," until they were brought out entirely without his agency or aid ? We know the cause as far as his Plays were concerned : they were not his : they belonged to the stock of the theatre. An actor of no eminence, he rapidly rose to be one of the two largest proprietors in the theatre ; his contribution to the stock being those matchless plays, which, according to the testimony of his contemporaries, continually filled "cockpit, galleries, boxes," so that "you would

scarce find room " with the same public which was indifferent to the works of other dramatists. He had sold these plays, and had no power over them ; and so also he had sold the Sonnets ; else he certainly would have published what the public would so eagerly have bought. For Shakespeare, be it remarked, was a prudent, thrifty man. He went to London penniless, and without profession or friends, except in the theatre ; and yet he retired at forty-five with a real and personal estate, the yearly income of which was equal to \$8000. As the author of thirty-seven such plays as he produced between 1588 and 1612, as one of the principal managers and shareholders of the theatre, and as an actor besides, he had little time or occasion to write one hundred and fifty-four Sonnets ; and we have the testimony of Meres that these Sonnets were well known among his private friends in 1598, when their author was but thirty-four years old, although some of them allude to the age and decay of their supposed writer. Could it be more clearly established, except by direct testimony, that Shakespeare did not write these Sonnets in his own person ; but that, as the custom was, he furnished them to those who, though no poets, were good paymasters, and thus obtained a part of the money which made him, when only twenty-six years old, an important shareholder in the theatre, as appears by the well known remonstrance from the Company dated Nov. 1589, and now in the possession of Lord Ellesmere ?

Again, it is possible to think of Shakespeare in early youth writing such a sonnet as No. 151 for another, but impossible to admit that he would, in his own person, address to *any* woman such gross *double entendres* as are contained in its last seven lines.

[Since writing the above I have read Mr. Charles Armitage Brown's very interesting book upon Shakespeare's Sonnets, in which he sets forth the extraordinary theory



that they were written as six entire poems in the sonnet stanza,—five of them to William Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke, and the sixth to Shakespeare's own mistress. Mr. Brown certainly shows the true appreciation of Shakespeare in his book, and very great ingenuity in the support of his favorite theory ; but in my judgment he leaves the latter but just where it was when he first stated it. Mr. Brown alludes to "an ingenious supposition" of the Rev. Mr. Dyce's with regard to the Sonnets. I am familiar with all of that gentleman's critical writings upon Shakespeare, but have not met with this supposition. Mr. Collier, as I find, had forestalled me in my deduction that Shakespeare wrote the Sonnets for other persons ; but he briefly states it, merely to abandon it without assigning any reason for or against it. I may be pardoned for thinking that the arguments which I have brought forward make the probability of the hypothesis which they sustain amount almost to moral certainty.

An observation on one of these Sonnets may interest some of my readers. The 127th is addressed to a brunette,—called a 'black beauty' in Shakespeare's day,—and commences thus :

"In the old age black was not counted fair,  
Or if it were, it bare not beauty's name."

This is an allusion to the remarkable fact, that during the chivalric ages brunettes were not acknowledged as beauties any where in Christendom. In all the old *contes, fabliaux*, and romances, the heroines are blondes. Such a thing as a brunette beauty is unknown in chivalric poetry : more than that,—the possession of dark eyes and hair, and the complexion which accompanies them, is referred to by the troubadours as a misfortune. But the brunettes have changed the fashion since that day.

## SHAKESPEARE'S NAME.

OF late years the attempt has been renewed, chiefly through the agency of Mr. Charles Knight, to change the orthography of Shakespeare's name to *Shakspeare*, on the ground that it is but proper to spell a man's name as he himself spells it; Sir Francis Madden having shown, beyond a question, that in four of the six genuine signatures of Shakespeare which have come down to us, the name is written by the poet himself,—*Shakspeare*. The remaining two, though most illegibly written, plainly contain ten or eleven letters. More than this, it is very evident that the name was originally, and, indeed, as late as the earlier years of William Shakespeare himself, pronounced Shaksper. The manner in which it is spelled in the old records in which it is found, varies almost to the extreme capacity of letters to change places and produce a sound approximating to that of the name as we pronounce it. It appears as Chacksper — Shaxpur — Shaxper — Schaksper — Schaksper — Schakespeyr — Shagspere — Saxpere — Shaxpere — Shaxpeare — Shaxsper — Shaxspere — Shaxespere — Shakspere — Shakspear — Shakspeere — Shackspeare — Shackespeare — Shackespere — Shakspeyr — Shaksper — Shakespere — Shakyspere — Shakespire — Shakespeire — Shakespear — Shakaspeare; and there are even other varieties of its orthography.

It is remarkable that the older the record, the more the spelling conforms to the pronunciation, Shak-sper or Shax-pur. But it is equally remarkable that on the title-pages of all the editions of Shakespeare's plays published during his life, almost without exception, as well as upon that of the original folio, his name is spelled Shakespeare. More than this : in the first folio edition of Ben Jonson's works, published in 1616, and carefully edited by Jonson himself, Shakespeare's name occurs twice in the lists of principal actors, and is in both instances spelled with the *e* in the first syllable and the *a* in the second ; and not only so, but in the second list, that appended to *Sejanus*, the syllables are separated with a hyphen, and the second begins with a capital letter, thus—SHAKE-SPEARE. Robert Green's unconscious testimony is also conclusive. The often quoted passage in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, published in 1592, in which he sneeringly says that the great dramatist "is, in his own conceit, the only *Shake-scene* in the country," shows plainly that the first syllable of the name was pronounced with the long, pure sound of *a*.

This, when taken in connection with the evidence of the title-pages of the quartos and the original folio, and also of the list of actors given in the latter, shows, beyond a question, that the name was pronounced and written Shake-speare in Shakespeare's day, and by those who were in habits of constant intercourse with him who made it illustrious. For it is impossible to pronounce Shake-speare, *Shak-sper*. It is also important to notice that in all the lists of actors given in Jonson's folio of 1616, nine in number, the several names, which are frequently repeated, are *always spelled in the same way*,—a rare, in fact, an unparalleled coincidence in any book of the time. This shows how carefully Jonson corrected his proof ; and also that the spelling, Shakespeare, was not the result of capricious orthography.

But, it may be asked, did not Shakespeare know how to write his own name ? and must we not conform to his mode of spelling it ? To the latter query the answer is no ; not of necessity. For, as Mr. Hunter asks, shall Lady Jane Grey become Lady Jane *Graye* ? shall the Dudleys become *Duddeleys*, or the Cromwells, *Crumwells*, &c. &c. &c., because it is certain that they spelled their names thus ? This is a decisive question. As to Shakespeare's knowledge of the mode of writing his own name, it must be remembered that, in his lifetime, there arose a necessity for a change in the spelling. When Robert Cook, Clarencieux King at Arms, because John Shaksper had become a man of substance and consideration, and had married into the gentle blood of the Ardens, gave him armorial bearings, the herald saw and seized the opportunity which the name afforded for punning blazonry ; and giving the worthy high bailiff the right to bear a spear *or* on a bend *sable*, he changed him and his descendants from Shakspers to Shakespeares from that time forward. But old customs change with difficulty, and endured longer then than now ; and thus it was that something of the old style of spelling the name clung to the Shakespeares in Stratford ; and even that William Shakespeare himself, when he went to London, did not entirely lay aside the habit of his early youth ; though all those to whom his name then was new wrote it, as they and he pronounced it,—Shakespeare. These reasons, and the explicit testimony of Jonson, the printers of the quartos, and the editors of the original folio, and the indirect but no less decisive evidence of Green, are all-sufficient for the retention of the spelling of the poet's day—SHAKESPEARE.

**SUPPLEMENTARY NOTICE OF**  
**MR. COLLIER'S FOLIO OF 1632.**





SUPPLEMENTARY NOTICE OF  
MR. COLLIER'S FOLIO OF 1632.

SINCE the pages devoted to the examination of Mr. Collier's Folio, in the first part of this volume, were in type, articles directed against the argument which they contain have appeared in various quarters of more or less respectability; and I have received Mr. Collier's second edition of his *Notes and Emendations*, which contains, in addition to a few emendations not in the first edition, a recital of the history of the volume as far as he has been able to trace it, and some notice of the manner in which his remarkable publication has been received by Shakesperian scholars. He has also privately printed fac-similes of passages in several of the plays as they appear in his famous folio. But the ablest advocate for the authority of the emendations in that volume fails to make out a case which will bear examination; and the additional fac-similes only deepen the impression which was made by that which accompanied the first edition of Mr. Collier's book.

The first attempt to sustain Mr. Collier's position has been the following up of a hint which he gave in his first publication upon this subject, remarking upon the emendation "*bollen bagpipe*" for "*woollen bagpipe*" (*Merchant of Venice*, Act IV. Sc. 1,) that "we shall never again see

'woollen bagpipe' in any edition of the text of Shakespeare, unless it be reproduced by some one who, having no right to use the emendation of our folio, 1632, adheres of necessity to the antiquated blunder, and attempts to justify it." This impeachment by anticipation of the veracity of any one who should profess to find the correction needless or unacceptable, Mr. Collier has wisely eliminated from his second edition. But although he had abandoned such an uncourteous and unfair mode of controversy, the advocates of the reprint of his edition on this side of the water have not profited by his example; and it has been in more than one instance charged, that those who have opposed the adoption of the majority of the changes in his folio—nobody has opposed them all—have done so, because they are editors of Shakespeare, and if these changes be received, "their editions will become valueless." The folly and audacity of this attack upon the motives rather than the arguments of the Shakesperian editors passes understanding. What is the truth? Only one of the opponents of Mr. Collier is in a position to have this impeachment of motives applied to him—Mr. Knight. Mr. Singer's edition of 1826 has for many years been out of print; and he, as well as Mr. Halliwell and Mr. Dyce, were, at the time of the publication of Mr. Collier's *Notes and Emendations*, and still are, editors of editions to be published, and therefore in a position to derive all possible benefit from Mr. Collier's discovery. The pretence, that "Mr. Collier possesses the copyright in England of his newly discovered emendations," is preposterous. There has not an edition of Shakespeare appeared in England for the last century and a half, the editor of which has not availed himself at pleasure of all the original labors of his predecessors, giving credit for them; and the excellent little Lansdowne edition recently published, is, by the publisher's advertisement,

"based on that of Mr. Collier,"—Mr. Knight's editorial labors and Mr. Dyce's comments being also used. The objection is equally futile in itself, and degrading to the cause in which it is made. It impotently attacks motives, for the sake of disparaging arguments, and seems to justify the suspicion, that it is made rather to bolster up an edition, than to arrive at the truth in one of the gravest and most interesting literary questions ever broached. Especially does this appear, when the attempt is made to throw discredit upon arguments against Mr. Collier's folio which have appeared in this country, by the same impeachment of motives. For, even supposing what is impossible, that Mr. Collier has the copyright of the Perkins Emendations in England ; *does that copyright extend to America ?* How foolish and how pitiful this objection is ! And even were all of the changes which Mr. Collier has introduced into that abomination which he calls "The Plays of Shakespeare," in spite of his own confession that many of them are indefensible, and that the corrector sometimes seems "to have been directed by his own, *often erroneous*, sense of fitness and expediency,"—were all these changes as plausible as the large majority of them are tasteless and wanton, the pre-existing field for editorial labor would not be materially diminished ; because it is remarkable, that *the acceptable emendations peculiar to this folio are all comparatively insignificant, and, and that it leaves all the more important of the obscure passages either untouched, or changed in such a way as to transfer the obscurity from one line to another, or to diffuse it through many.* Let us hear no more of this ungenerous and unfounded objection. The case is simply this :—Mr. Collier himself admits that there are many readings in his recent edition which are entirely indefensible : no one denies, that there are some which unquestionably restore the genuine text : finally and conclusively, there is

no let or hindrance to the adoption of them all by any editor in America, with the added advantage, if he possess it, of being able to correct the more important passages which the corrector or correctors of the Perkins folio left in utter confusion. It is in no captious mood that this important subject has been generally treated. All lovers of Shakespeare, hailed Mr. Collier's announcement with delight—a delight which was changed to chagrin, when they found out what it was that he had so announced. Mr. Collier is not censured by any one, as he seems to think he is, on account of his “accidental *discovery* of the corrected folio, 1632,”\* but because he indorses changes in it which conflict with Shakespeare's own design and language, to say nothing of common sense; and above all, because he boldly incorporated these into the text of a popular edition in one volume, when he himself acknowledges that a part of them, at least, have no business there.

A specious but unfair comparison of the condition of the text of the New Testament with that of Shakespeare, has been made in order to show how much the latter is in need of emendation. In the first place, there are at least five times as many words in the latter as in the former; next, the former is received as the word of God; and the most obscure part of it, the Apocalypse, closes with a curse upon the man who adds to or takes from that book, which must have stayed the hand of many an ambitious manuscript corrector; and last, the number of passages in Shakespeare about which there is any reasonable dispute, is, as my readers are by this time convinced, I trust, comparatively small. Commentators have, it is true, proposed changes innumerable: and there is neither human law nor divine curse to prevent them from saying that light is

\* Notes and Emendations, Second Edition, p. ix.

darkness ; but because they do so, we are not obliged to admit a doubt upon the subject. So any man, if he choose, may declare that Shakespeare made *Prospero* say that his brother was a sinner "to untruth," by telling a lie, and *Hamlet*, that he lacked "gall to make transgression bitter ;" but we are not therefore constrained to take such nonsense into serious consideration.

The ablest defence of Mr. Collier's folio, a defence which put the most specious arguments in the most plausible and telling way, appeared in the *North American Review* for April, 1854. The veteran Shakesperian scholar himself did not make a case nearly so imposing in favor of his corrector. In that paper it is concluded, from the ascertained history of the volume (now called in England the Perkins folio), the appearance of the chirography, the nature of the erased passages, and the [assumed] fact that the emendations were made by a player, the London theatres being closed from 1642 to 1658,—that these emendations were completed before 1664.

But the ascertained history of the volume is merely that, in Mr. Collier's own words, "it is probable" that it came from Upton Court, the seat of a wealthy Roman Catholic family named Perkins, towards the close of the last century ; that the volume has "Thomas Perkins, his Booke," written upon its cover (which cover, be it remarked, is not that in which it was first bound in 1632) ; and that there was an actor of some distinction, named Richard Perkins, in the reign of Charles I.\* This only proves, as

\* The eagerness with which Mr. Collier clutches at even the shadow of a straw to buoy up the authority of his folio is amusingly, though somewhat painfully, apparent when he says : "The name of the great actor of the reign of Charles I. was Richard ; and a Richard Perkins, called Esquire in Ashmole's Collections, at a date not stated married Lady Merwin, a benefactress of the parish. Why should we deem it impossible that Richard Perkins, having attained eminence on the stage, subsequently

any one can see, merely that it is possible, but not even that it is probable, that there is some connection between the actor and the Thomas Perkins, who was possibly of Upton Court, whence "it is probable" that the volume came about 1780 or 1790. Thus far, then, the volume is as much without a "story" as Canning's *Knife Grinder*.

The appearance of the chirography, must be set down at once as of little worth in determining the date of the emendations, for all valuable purposes. The form of the long *s*, the turn of the bow of the *e* to the left, and the prolongation of the second stroke of the *h* below the line, cannot be relied on as determining the date within fifty years. I possess a copy of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, with the fourth title page, 1669, in which there is a manuscript annotation which bears all these marks. I also once owned an old and very dilapidated copy of the first folio of Ben Jonson's Plays, which had evidently belonged to a farmer, or the steward of some great household, on all the blank spaces of which were memorandums of the purchase or sale of beeves and muttons, and tuns of ale, &c., none of which were dated earlier than 1662; and in all of them the *e*, *s*, and *h* were formed in this peculiar way. More: I have also a fac-simile of a MS. by Thomas Dekker, signed by him, and dated Sept. 12, 1616, in which the *h* is never brought below the line, and the long *s* is made in the modern form. The handwriting of the emendations in

'married a lady of title and property!' It is sad to knock away this prop of a shadowy possibility; but it seems strange that the historian of the English stage should not have known, or if he had forgotten, should have neglected the few minutes' study necessary to assure himself, that after the closing of the London theatres in 1642, this Richard Perkins and one Sumner, both actors at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, kept house together in Clerkenwell, and died in poverty, and were buried there "some years before the Restoration." This is stated in the *Historia Histrionica*, published in 1699, and is referred to in *Some Account of the English Stage*, vol i. p. 24.



this Perkins folio, if upon a volume without date, would therefore fix its date with certainty only at some time between 1600 and 1675, and in this case is worth nothing against internal evidence, which fixes the date of some of them after 1662.\*

As to the nature of the erased passages, the Reviewer's statement assumes so much, that I must quote it in full. "All passages of an indecent, or needlessly licentious character, are *carefully* struck out, evincing, says Mr. Collier, 'the advance of a better or purer taste, about the time

\* The unanswerable argument against the date of the MS. corrector's stage direction in *Love's Labor's Lost*, (where he writes that *Biron* "*gets him in a tree*," and speaks "*in the tree*,") that there was no practicable scenery in English theatres until after 1662, the Reviewer attempts to set aside in this most astounding style: "Why not argue also," he says, "that the whole first Scene of the *Tempest* is spurious, because it is supposed to take place on board a ship! or that many scenes in *As You Like It* ought to be rejected, because they take place amid a whole forest of trees! It is evident that *Biron* is directed to speak 'in a tree,' just as *Juliet* makes love 'in a balcony.'" But the Reviewer does not see the difference between the *Scene* (i. e., the place of action), and *scenery*. It is one thing to suppose an action to take place on board a ship, and another to direct one of the actors to *run up the shrouds* of a ship. Any dramatist may make a forest the locality of his play, but to make one of his actors climb a tree, he must have the tree for him to climb. Should a copy of the *Tempest* appear, with MS. directions for a sailor to run up the shrouds, it would prove positively that those directions were written after 1662. But the Reviewer constructed this argument with a want of knowledge singular in the author of such an able paper; for in the original edition of the *Tempest* (the first folio), there is *not the slightest indication, by way of stage direction, that the first scene passes on shipboard*; in the first edition of *As You Like It* (first folio), there is *no mention of a forest or a single sapling in the stage directions*; and in neither the first folio nor the early quartos of *Romeo and Juliet*, is there *the slightest hint that Juliet makes love in a balcony*. All these stage directions are deductions from the text, added in modern days. Did the Reviewer never read, in Sir Philip Sydney's *Defence of Poesy*, the well-known passage alluding to the appointments of the stage for which Shakespeare wrote: "What childe is there, that, coming to a play, and seeing *Thebes* written in great letters upon an old door, doth believe that it is *Thebes*?"

when the emendator went over the volume.'"—[*N. A. Review*, p. 397.] But Mr. Collier does not say so. He says: "Some expressions and lines of an irreligious or indelicate character are also struck out, evincing, *perhaps*, the advance of a better or purer taste," &c. [*N. & E. Sec. ed.* p. xviii.] This is very far short of the Reviewer's statement; and well may Mr. Collier shelter his supposition behind a contingency; for his own *Notes and Emendations* shows that the corrector left untouched very many more profane and indecorous expressions than he struck out; and also that he did strike out perfectly unexceptionable passages, too brief to add appreciably to the length of the performance; plainly proving that he was governed only by his own caprice in this regard. The Reviewer most strangely concludes, that these erasures of a few indelicate passages, forbid the belief that these marginalia were written after the Restoration, and show that they were made rather "in Charles the First's time, when \* \* \* the diffusion of Puritanism compelled the editors of the first folio to strike out the profane ejaculations of *Falstaff*, and some minor indecencies which had been tolerated in the publication of the earlier quartos." But surely, the Reviewer forgot that the omissions in the first folio were only made in compliance with an express statute which was passed in the first of James I., 1604!—eight years before Shakespeare ceased to write!—twelve years before he died!—nineteen years before the publication of the first folio, and twenty-eight years before the publication of the volume upon which these emendations are made! The "diffusion of Puritanism" enforced no other erasures upon the editors of the folios of either 1623 or 1632; neither did it forbid the publication of indelicate passages by Davenant, in twelve plays issued between 1634 and 1660, nor the issue of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher in folio 1637,



containing or rather consisting entirely of plays so indelicate in their very structure as well as language, that Shakespeare's compared to them seem "whiter than new snow on a raven's back." The Reviewer has undertaken to prove too much, and has thus succeeded in proving nothing at all.

The assumed fact, that the emendations were made by a player, does not help to give them any authority, or even any consequence, except as auxiliaries to the text of the original folio:—that is, to make them valuable as early reminiscences or conjectures, aided, perhaps, by copies of actors' parts, and to be received when the text of the original is incomprehensible or inconsistent, and when they, by probable corrections, make it clear and congruous. And here, for the sake of the argument, let us grant that these changes were made by Richard Perkins, an actor in the time of Charles I., between the years 1642 and 1658, and that he had copies of actors' parts and prompt books of his time to assist him. What "authority" do his labors derive from those facts, which can give them a feather's weight against the text of Shakespeare's fellow actors and business partners, who had "scarce received from him a blot in *his papers*,"—when that text is comprehensible? It contains many defects, the results of carelessness; and those, Mr. Richard Perkins, or Mr. John Jenkins, may correct if he can; and the probabilities are perhaps in favor of the former, because he came nearer to Shakespeare. But when, in a passage not obscure, we have to decide between Richard or Thomas Perkins, his Booke, and John Heminge and Henrie Condell, their Booke, is there a question which must go to the wall? The judgment, the memory, the very copied part of an actor, even as to a play in which he performed, is not to be trusted thirty years after its production, against such testimony as we have in favor of the

copy from which the first folio was printed. It would not be trusted, even in this century ; much less two hundred years ago, when, as we know, the lines of the dramatist were wantonly and mercilessly mutilated, both by managers and actors.

The following passage in the Stationer's Address to the Reader in the first folio of Beaumont & Fletcher's Plays, published in 1647, which I have never seen noticed, has an important bearing upon Mr. Collier's folio, and adds greatly to the evidence in favor of the absolute authority of the original folio of Shakespeare's works, and against that of the early quarto editions.

" One thing I must answer before it bee objected ; 'tis this : When these *Comedies* and *Tragedies* were presented on the Stage the *Actours* omitted some *Scenes* and *Passages* (with the *Authour's*, consent) as occasion led them ; and when private friends desired a copy, they then (and justly too) transcribed what they *Acted*. But now you have both All that was *Acted*, and all that was not ; even the perfect full originalls, without the least mutilation."

It has been reasonably conjectured by his editors and commentators, that the early quarto editions of Shakespeare's plays were surreptitiously printed from the actors' parts, which were obtained separately, and written out in proper order to form the entire play. Here, however, we have positive and direct contemporary evidence that it was the habit of the actors in Shakespeare's time, and in the succeeding generation, to give copies of the acting copy to their private friends, and that in so doing they "*transcribed what they acted*," omitting such scenes and passages as were omitted in the representation. Thus we have the surreptitious appearance of the quartos and their disagreement with the text of the authentic folio of 1623 (published by Shakespeare's friends, fellow-actors, and business part-

ners, from his own manuscripts, with "hardly a blot" in them), and also a great number of the changes in Mr. Collier's folio, clearly accounted for.

The process, as this important passage shows, was this. The author furnished the original MS. This was copied and cut down for stage use; from this copy the actors' parts were taken; and "when their private friends desired a copy, they then transcribed what they acted," and thus their friends had for their own use and that of such printers as would pay for it, *the copy of a copy of part of a mutilated copy*.

Such "authorities" quite probably directed in part the labors of one corrector who worked on Mr. Collier's folio. Living in the succeeding generation (for it should be remembered that Shakespeare had been dead sixteen, and had ceased writing nearly thirty years before this famous folio was printed), he obtained copies of copies of the mutilated *stage copy of the day*, and made his text conform to it in part at least. This accounts for the changes for the sake of rhyme (made to suit the caprice of the actors or the corrector), the striking out of portions of the text, and the cutting off of all that part of the final scene of *Hamlet*, which occurs after the action is finished, and thereby spoils what in histrionic phrase is called 'the tag' of the piece. It is quite natural that such a copy should contain many acceptable corrections of the typographical errors in the original; and this does contain about two hundred such, at least one hundred and seventy-three of which, had been made by modern editors previous to Mr. Collier's discovery of the volume. It is also quite natural that a volume so corrected should contain the thousand needless and insufferable mutilations which, embodied in the text which Mr. Collier, in spite of his admission that he cannot approve of all the changes, has presumed to publish as "The Plays of Shake-

speare," make that edition incomparably the worst of the many bad editions which have been published.

It is important, too, as affecting the value of emendations derived from actors' parts, to notice that Shakespeare's plays were acted by other companies than that which owned the right in them, and possessed the old stage copies. For, by an entry in the Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, who was Master of the Revels in the reigns of James I. and Charles I., and which will be found in Mr. Collier's *Annals of the Stage*, vol. II. p. 7, we know that he was paid £5 by Heminge, on the 11th of April, 1627, "to forbid the playing of Shakespeare's plays to the Red Bull Company." Now this Red Bull Company, or any other which would pirate Shakespeare's plays, would not scruple to mutilate his works, after the fashion of literary pirates, and adapt them to the capacities of their histrionic force and the taste of their audiences, just as, we know, the corrector of this Perkins folio did. The parts of such mutilated plays would be copied out for the actors; and what would such actors' parts or prompt books be worth against the authority of the first folio? Indeed, it is more than probable that this Perkins folio was submitted to the treatment which it has experienced, for the double purpose of a new edition for readers and to supply the wants of the companies which were sure to be formed after Davenant's re-establishment of theatrical entertainments,—the rights of Shakespeare's company having determined during the Protectorate.

But the Reviewer seeks to elevate the authority of these emendations, by dragging down that of the first folio. He says, that "all the twenty plays which were first printed in the folio, had existed in manuscript, without being seen by their author, for at least eleven years;" that the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* had "existed only in written

copies for thirty-two years ; that "the Globe Theatre was burnt down in 1613, and it is more than probable that all of Shakespeare's original manuscripts, which had survived to that period, were then destroyed," [this, in spite of Heminge and Condell's direct testimony, that they had his papers,] and that "the written copies were multiplied by careless transcribers." Let us again, for the sake of the argument, grant all this ;—how does it build up the authority of the Perkins folio ? The Reviewer goes on very reasonably to say, "*alterations and omissions* were made from time to time, to adapt the performance to the *varying exigencies of the theatre, or the altered taste of the times.*" This is very likely to be true ; but if it invalidate the authority of the manuscript copy from which the first folio was printed, with what doubled and trebled force does it crush the pretensions of those used by a player when the theatres were closed, in 1642, and which had been subject to *nineteen years more of alteration and omission, to suit the exigencies of the theatre, and the taste of the times !*

Again, the Reviewer, attempting to grapple with the overpowering argument, against both the authority and the intelligence of the MS. corrector, that so many of his readings are inadmissible, and could not possibly have formed a part of the text, thinks that he has conquered it by fastening the same defect upon the first folio. He says : "we admit it [the inadmissibility of the readings], but we must remind the objectors, that precisely the same thing is true of the first folio." To a superficial glance, this has a formidable look ; but, in truth, it is too weak to stand alone. For we know that the first folio was authorized ; and its errors are *corruptions, the results of accident and carelessness*, of which they are themselves the best evidence ; while the absurd, inconsistent, prosaic and ridiculous readings of the MS. corrector are *deliberately formed*,

—*the fruits of painful effort* to correct those accidental errors in some cases, and to better the text in others. The errors of the first folio are casualties ; the stupidities of the Perkins folio are perpetrated with malice aforethought. The former prove only the absence of care ; the latter exist only in consequence of care, and therefore prove the absence of authority.

The number of cases in which I am assumed to have admitted the success of the MS. corrector, is brought up as evidence in favor of his "authority." There are 173 of his acceptable corrections which have been made by others, and 117 which are peculiar to him, and which, in my own words, "seem to be admissible corrections of passages which need correction,"—making 290 in all, including, however, the numerous restorations from the first folio, and the early quartos. What one editor, critic, or commentator, exclaims the Reviewer, can claim the original suggestion of an equal number of *conjectural* emendations, which are admitted to be sound or plausible ? I answer, without hesitation, Nicholas Rowe ; and he only forestalled the others in making them, because he was the first. The most of these corrections are of typographical errors, such as no intelligent proof reader would fail to detect and rectify. Rowe and Theobald made nearly all of them ; and Rowe would have almost certainly made them all, had he worked with half the plodding care of the corrector of the Perkins folio. As it was, he made many which his predecessor should have made. Turn to the *Notes and Emendations*, and notice the first of the coincidences, in the *Tempest*, Act I. Sc. 2 :

"A brave vessel,  
Who had, no doubt, some noble creature [*creatures*] in her."

Next, in the same Scene,

" Where they prepar'd .  
 A rotten carcass of a butt [*boat*], not rigg'd,  
 Nor tackle, sail, nor mast; the very rats  
 Instinctively had [*have*] quit it."

What boy in his 'teens, having these passages given him to copy, would not make such corrections instinctively? These are fair specimens of a majority of his [assumed] two hundred and ninety admissible emendations; so does the first folio swarm with typographical errors. But there are other corrections which seem to show that he sometimes conjectured successfully, or remembered correctly, or had a book or MS. which helped him to the right word. It seems more than probable that he was indebted to all these means. Certainly he was indebted both to conjecture and the early quartos,—his adoption of readings which appear in the latter being nothing in his favor, as they existed in his time in far greater numbers than when the editors of the last century used them, just as he did.

Assuming that the MS. corrector was a player "who had lived in an age [the first half of the seventeenth century] when conjectural emendation of an English author was an art as yet unheard of, and when the writings of our great dramatist were so little known or prized, that four rude and uncritical editions of them sufficed for a century," and concluding that it is impossible "that the whole eight [of the entire lines which he interpolates] should have been invented, or made up by mere conjecture, by a poor player in the earlier part of the seventeenth century," the Reviewer considers it established, that the corrector could not have conjectured, but must have had authority. But even granting that these emendations were made "between 1642 and 1664," it is a well-known fact, that at least a dozen corrected folios of the second, third, and fourth editions exist at present, one of them, Mr. Dent's, being

not only, like the others, corrected "in an ancient hand," but its numerous emendations being "curious and important, consisting of stage directions, alterations in the punctuation," &c. Did conjectural emendation spring up at once, armed at all points, immediately upon the publication of the third folio? But whether it did or not, the man who made some of the corrections in the Perkins folio did conjecture, and has left irrefragable evidence that he did. In the private fac similes before mentioned, a passage near the end of the last Scene of *Hamlet*, and another in *Othello*, Act IV. Sc. 1, show this undeniably. In the first, two lines are printed thus :

" Good night, sweet Prience,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

The corrector at first rectified the misprint by obliterating the *e* in "Prience;" but, afterwards, concluding to make the line rhyme with the next, he marked out "sweet Prience" and substituted *be blest*; the couplet being then followed by an impudent, gag-like

*ffinis,*

and the rest of the Scene being stricken out. In the passage in *Othello*, when the Moor, just before he falls in a trance, says "Nature herself would not invest herself in such a shadowing passion, without some Instruction," the corrector first changes "shadowing" to *shuddering*, and strikes out the comma after "passion;" but, concluding to do without the sentence, draws his pen remorselessly through it. And in *The Merchant of Venice*, Act V. Sc. 1, the folio of 1632 has,

"Therefore the poet did feign  
That Orpheus drew *tears*, stones, floods," &c.



Here "tears" is a misprint for *trees*, which appears in the first folio, and in the two early quartos ; but the MS. corrector, deceived by the likeness of *tears* to *beasts*, substituted the latter word at first ; after referring to the other editions, however, he restores the right word, *trees*. If this be not conjecture, Nahum Tate wrote *King Lear*. Conjecture helped or hindered this corrector as it did those of the dozen or more copies of the other "rude and uncritical editions" which "sufficed for a century." But neither the number—four—of these editions, nor their careless printing, shows that Shakespeare's works were "little known or prized ;" for half that number of editions sufficed for every other dramatist of that century ; and all, except those of careful Ben Jonson, were vilely printed.

The private plates of fac similes of Mr. Collier's folio contain brief extracts from seventeen plays : *Tempest*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *As You Like It*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night*, *Winter's Tale*, *Henry V.*, *Richard III.*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Coriolanus*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and *Cymbeline*. A close examination of these fac similes only furnishes cumulative evidence in favor of the conclusions to which we have already arrived.

There is one of them the very look of which would seem fatal to the least pretence in favor of the authority of the volume. Types can but poorly convey the effect of the changes upon the eye ; but they may help the imagination to picture the appearance of the page. The passage is the following, from *Titus Andronicus*, Act II. Sc. 2.

"Tit.—The hunt is up, the morne is bright and gray,  
The fields are fragrant, and the Woods are greene :  
Vncouple heere, and let us make a bay,  
And wake the Emperour and his lovely Bride,

And rouze the Prince ; and ring a hunter's peals,  
 That all the Court may eccho with the noise.  
 Sonnes, let it be your charge, as it is ours,  
 To attend the Emperour's person carefully :  
 I have bene troubled in my sleepe this night.  
 But dawning day new comfort has inspir'd."

These lines are thus changed in Mr. Collier's folio ; the original words being erased, and the substitutes, here in italics, written in the margin :

"*Tit.*—The hunt is up, the morne is bright and *gay*,  
 The fields are fragrant, and the Woods are *wide*.  
 Vncouple heere, and let us make a bay,  
 And wake the Emperour and his lovely Bride,  
 And rouze the Prince, and *sing* a hunter's *round*,  
 That all the Court may eccho with the *sound*.  
 Sonnes, let it be your charge, *and so will I*,  
 To attend the Emperour's person carefully :  
 I have bene troubled in my sleepe this night,  
 But dawning day *brought* comfort and *delight*."

Can any man in his senses believe that "greene" could be misprinted for *wide*, "peals" for *round*, "noise" for *sound*, "as it is ours" for *and so will I*, "new" for *brought*, and "hath inspir'd" for *and delight* ; and that all these errors, with two others, could occur in ten lines ? The supposition is too absurd for a moment's consideration. The words do not bear the slightest possible likeness to each other ; and besides, we must remember that if Mr. Collier's folio be worth any thing as an authority, the compositor made these mistakes, which are impossible under any circumstances, even when he had rhymes to guide him. And yet we are asked to believe that all this did happen.

But if the folio have any authority, we must believe in all these impossible errors of the press, and believe that Shakespeare did not write the last part of the last Scene to be played. For authority implies a right to submission,

irrespective of any exercise of reason or preference on the part of the person submitting. To contend for the authority of a part only, greater or less, of the emendations in this or any other folio, is to contend for a patent, palpable absurdity. It is as if a legatee were to claim that such parts of the will of the testator as accorded with his, the legatee's, views, had authority, but that those which he did not like had no authority. If we defer to a single change in Mr. Collier's folio because of its *authority*, we must defer to all ; for we have the same testimony, or rather want of testimony, to the authenticity of all the changes that we have to that of any one of them. Therefore, as the few and rapidly diminishing believers in Mr. Collier's folio, can bring themselves to contend for only a majority of its changes of the authentic text, and as Mr. Collier himself says, in the Preface to his late edition of the Plays of Shakespeare, that "it is not to be understood that he approves of all the changes in the text," it is plain that even the discoverer and the advocates of this volume *exercise their individual judgment* in accepting or rejecting the changes of the text in it ; and, *by their own confession, do not defer to its authority*. Thus they yield the only essential point. There can be no objection to any man, or any number of men, amusing themselves by making needless and absurd changes in the text of any author, so long as they do not contend for the authenticity of those changes, and insist upon their usurpation of the authority of the original text. As Mr. Collier and his dwindling band of submissive followers acknowledge that they do not contend for all the changes, the only important point in dispute is gained ; and they themselves, by their exercise of judgment as to which they shall approve and which they shall condemn, have applied Malone's unexceptionable rule to them as "arbitrary emendations, . . . made at the

will and pleasure of the conjecturer, . . . not authorized by *authentic* copies printed or manuscript, . . . and to be judged of *by their reasonableness or probability*." The verdict of Shakesperian scholars upon their "reasonableness or probability" has been unanimous, that an overwhelming majority are unreasonable and improbable; and the good sense and instinctive perception of the intelligent readers of Shakespeare is fast leading them to the same conclusion.

Faith in the first folio, and a distrust of the MS. corrector, do not rest upon a *petitio principii* as the Reviewer would have it. We have the direct and explicit testimony of Shakespeare's friends, fellow actors and principal partners in the theatre, that the first folio was printed from *the* text of Shakespeare, and, errors excepted, does contain that text; it is undeniably manifest that the corrector *did* indulge in "mere guess-work;" and therefore, as against the authorized edition, we must consider all his labors as merely conjectural, and only to be received when they consistently correct the palpable accidental errors of that edition. But were this not so, nine tenths of those peculiar to him would be rejected upon their own merits. They seem to be modelled upon the conjectural effort of the man who, not being able to understand the strong figure, "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," amended his New Testament to read, "strain at a *gate* and swallow a *saw-mill*."

But after all, it is not improbable that Richard Perkins did make some of these corrections. It was admitted, for the argument's sake, that he did make them; but now having seen that his making them gives them no semblance of authority, it is safe to say that it is even more than probable that he had a hand in them. It seems that this Richard Perkins was not only an actor but "also in some measure a poet, as he wrote a copy of verses prefixed to Heywood's

*Apology for Actors.*" The murder's out ! He was "something of a poet !" This accounts for his turning speech after speech of blank verse into rhyme ; for his making *Hamlet* bring up with a rhyme, after first correcting the line which he thus altered ; for his submitting other plays to similar treatment ; and for the insertion of several entire lines, which, although two or three of them are not unlike what Shakespeare might have written in those particular passages, are not at all beyond the reach of any man who is "something of a poet" and has read the context.

It seems as if Master Perkins had been about to bring out an edition of Shakespeare's works as he thought they should have been written and should be acted. He modernized the language, struck out whatever he thought uninteresting, added rhymes where he thought they were needed, added stage directions to conform to the custom of the day, which was to be very particular in that respect, attended minutely to the punctuation, corrected even the turned letters as Mr. Collier assures us (not at all necessary for a stage copy), changed the old prefix of *Beggar* in the Induction to the *Taming of the Shrew*, to *Sly* (equally unnecessary for the stage), underscored the old rhymes and quotations (also entirely needless in a stage copy), and thought that he would have a very fine edition ; and, in truth, it would have been quite as good, and of the same kind, as Pope's and Warburton's. But the publishers of the next edition, in 1664, did not believe in 'Shakespeare according to Perkins,' and they reprinted the old folios, adding even all the plays that had borne Shakespeare's name in his lifetime.

Now, Perkins may have acted in Shakespeare's plays while the dramatist was living ; he was doubtless "something of a poet," and may have had some actors' parts which were "copies of copies of a part of a mutilated

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